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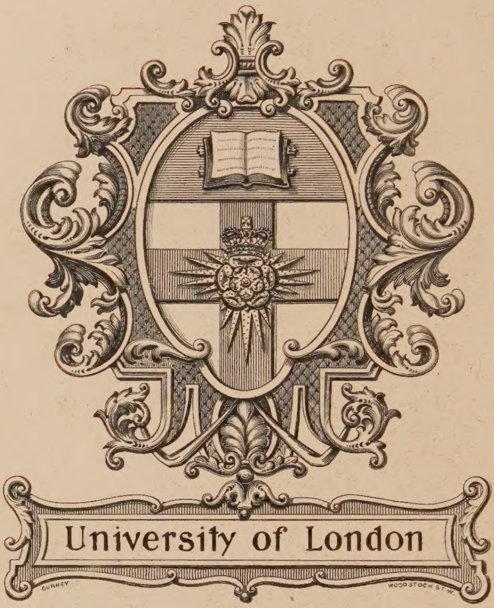

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THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

AUTHORISED EDITION.

FOURTH SERIES,

COMMENCING WITH THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT
OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

---

58 VICTORIÆ.

VOLUME XXX.

COMPRISING THE PERIOD FROM
THE FIFTH DAY OF FEBRUARY
TO
THE TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY OF FEBRUARY
1895.

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THE MINISTRY

Of the Right Honourable the EARL of ROSEBERY, K.G., at the Opening of the Session on 5th February 1895.

THE CABINET.

First Lord of the Treasury and Lord President of the Council	Right Hon. Earl of Rosebery, K.G.
Lord High Chancellor	Right Hon. Lord Herschell.
Lord Privy Seal and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster	Right Hon. Lord Tweedmouth.
Secretary of State for the Home Department.	Right Hon. Herbert Henry Asquith.
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs	Right Hon. Earl of Kimberley, K.G.
Secretary of State for the Colonies	Right Hon. Marquess of Ripon, K.G.
Secretary of State for War	Right Hon. Henry Campbell-Bannerman.
Secretary of State for India	Right Hon. Henry Hartley Fowler.
Chancellor of the Exchequer	Right Hon. Sir William Vernon Harcourt.
First Lord of the Admiralty	Right Hon. Earl Spencer, K.G.
President of the Board of Trade	Right Hon. James Bryce.
First Commissioner of Works	Right Hon. Herbert John Gladstone.
Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant	Right Hon. John Morley.
Secretary for Scotland and Vice President of the Scotch Education Department	Right Hon. Sir George Otto Trevelyan, Bart.
President of the Local Government Board	Right Hon. George John Shaw-Lefevre.
Postmaster General	Right Hon. Arnold Morley.
Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education	Right Hon. Arthur Herbert Dyke Acland.

NOT IN THE CABINET.

President of the Board of Agriculture	Right Hon. Herbert Coulston Gardner.
Lords of the Treasury	Richard Knight Causton, Esq. William Alexander McArthur, Esq. Ronald Craufurd Munro Ferguson, Esq.
Lords of the Admiralty	Admiral Sir Frederick William Richards, K.C.B. Rear Admiral Lord Walter Talbot Kerr. Rear Admiral Sir John Arbuthnot Fisher, C.B. Captain Gerard Henry Uctred Noel, R.N. Edmund Robertson, Esq.
Patronage Secretary to the Treasury	Thomas Edward Ellis, Esq.
Financial Secretary to the Treasury	Right Hon. Sir John Tomlinson Hibbert, K.C.B.
Secretary to the Admiralty	Right Hon. Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth, Bart.
Secretary to the Board of Trade	Thomas Burt, Esq.
Secretary to the Local Government Board	Sir Balthazar Walter Foster.
Under Secretary, Home Department	George William Erskine Russell, Esq.
Under Secretary, Foreign Department	Sir Edward Grey, Bart.
Under Secretary for the Colonies	Sydney Charles Buxton, Esq.
Under Secretary for War	Lord Sandhurst.
Under Secretary for India	Lord Reay.
Paymaster General	Right Hon. Charles Seale-Hayne.
Financial Secretary to the War Department	William Woodall, Esq.
Judge Advocate General	Right Hon. Sir Francis Henry Jeune.
Attorney General	Sir Robert Threshie Reid.
Solicitor General	Sir Frank Lockwood.

SCOTLAND.

Lord Advocate	Right Hon. John Blair Balfour.
Solicitor General	Thomas Shaw, Esq.

IRELAND.

Lord Lieutenant	Right Hon. Lord Houghton, K.P.
Lord Chancellor	Right Hon. Samuel Walker.
Attorney General	Right Hon. The MacDermot.
Solicitor General	Serjeant Charles Hare Hemphill.

QUEEN'S HOUSEHOLD.

Lord Steward	Marquess of Breadalbane, K.G.
Lord Chamberlain	Right Hon. Lord Carrington, G.C.M.G.
Master of the Horse	Right Hon. Earl of Cork and Orrery, K.P.
Treasurer of the Household	Hon. Arthur George Brand.
Comptroller of the Household	George Granville Leveson-Gower, Esq.
Vice-Chamberlain of the Household	Right Hon. Charles Robert Spencer.
Captain of the Corps of Gentlemen-at-Arms	Right Hon. Earl of Chesterfield.
Captain of the Yeomen of the Guard	Right Hon. Lord Kensington.
Master of the Buckhounds	Right Hon. Lord Ribblesdale.
Acting Mistresses of the Robes	The Dowager Duchess of Roxburghe. The Dowager Duchess of Atholl.

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ROLL

OF THE

LORDS SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL

IN

THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT

OF

THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

---

58 VICTORIÆ, 1895.

MEM.—*According to the Usage of Parliament, when the House appoints a Select Committee, the Lords appointed to serve upon it are named in the Order of their Rank, beginning with the highest; and so, when the House sends a Committee to a Conference with the Commons, the Lord highest in Rank is called first, and the rest go forth in like order: but when the Whole House is called over for any Purpose, within the House, or for the Purpose of proceeding forth to Westminster Hall, or upon any public Solemnity, the call begins invariably with the Junior Baron.*

His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales.

His Royal Highness Alfred Ernest Albert Duke of Edinburgh

His Royal Highness Arthur William Patrick Albert Duke of Connaught and Strathearn.

His Royal Highness George Frederick Ernest Albert Duke of York.

His Royal Highness Leopold Charles Edward George Albert Duke of Albany.

His Royal Highness George William Frederick Charles Duke of Cambridge.

Edward White Archbishop of Canterbury.

Farrer Lord Herschell, *Lord High Chancellor.*

William Dalrymple Archbishop of York.

Archibald Philip Lord Rosebery, *Lord President of the Council. (Earl of Rosebery.)*

Edward Lord Tweedmouth, *Lord Privy Seal.*

Henry Duke of Norfolk, *Earl Marshal of England.*

Algernon Duke of Somerset.

Charles Henry Duke of Richmond.

Augustus Charles Lennox Duke of Grafton.

Henry Charles Fitzroy Duke of Beaufort.

William Amelius Aubrey de Vere Duke of St. Albans.

George Godolphin Duke of Leeds.

Herbrand Arthur Duke of Bedford.

Spencer Compton Duke of Devonshire.

Charles Richard John Duke of Marlborough.

John James Robert Duke of Rutland.

William Alexander Louis Stephen Duke of Brandon. *(Duke of Hamilton.)*

William John Arthur Charles James Duke of Portland.

William Angus Drogo Duke of Manchester.

Henry Pelham Archibald Douglas Duke of Newcastle.

Algernon George Duke of Northumberland.

His Royal Highness Ernest Augustus William Adolphus George Frederick Duke of Cumberland and Teviotdale.

Henry Duke of Wellington.

Cromartie Duke of Sutherland.

Hugh Lupus Duke of Westminster.

Alexander William George Duke of Fife.

George Douglas Duke of Argyll.

Gavin Marquess of Breadalbane, *Lord Steward of the Household.*

Augustus John Henry Beaumont Marquess of Winchester.

Henry Charles Keith Marquess of Lansdowne.

John Villiers Stuart Marquess Townshend.

Robert Arthur Talbot Marquess of Salisbury.

John Alexander Marquess of Bath.

James Marquess of Abercorn. *(Duke of Abercorn.)*

Hugh de Grey Marquess of Hertford.

John Patrick Marquess of Bute.

William Alleyne Marquess of Exeter.

William Marquess of Northampton.

John Charles Marquess Camden.

Henry Marquess of Anglesey.

George Henry Hugh Marquess of Cholmondeley.

Henry Augustus Marquess of Ailesbury.

Frederick William John Marquess of Bristol.

Archibald Marquess of Ailsa.

Constantine Charles Henry Marquess of Normanby.

George Frederick Samuel Marquess of Ripon.

William Marquess of Abergavenny.

Gavin Marquess of Breadalbane. *(In another place as Lord Steward of the Household.)*

Frederick Henry Temple Marquess of Dufferin and Ava.

Lawrence Marquess of Zetland.

Charles Henry John Earl of Shrewsbury.

Frederick Arthur Earl of Derby.

Warner Francis John Plantagenet Earl of Huntingdon.

George Robert Charles Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery.

Henry Hugh Earl of Devon.

Henry Charles Earl of Suffolk and Berkshire.

Rudolph Robert Basil Aloysius Augustine Earl of Denbigh.

Anthony Mildmay Julian Earl of Westmorland.

Montague Earl of Lindsey.

William Earl of Stamford.

Murray Edward Gordon Earl of Winchilsea and Nottingham.

Edwyn Francis Earl of Chesterfield.

Edward George Henry Earl of Sandwich.

George Devereux de Vere Earl of Essex.

George James Earl of Carlisle.

William Henry Walter Earl of Doncaster. *(Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry.)*

Anthony Earl of Shaftesbury.

Randal Mowbray Thomas Earl of Berkeley.

Montague Arthur Earl of Abingdon.

Aldred Frederick George Beresford Earl of Scarbrough.

Arnold Allan Cecil Earl of Albemarle.

George William Earl of Coventry.

Victor Albert George Earl of Jersey.

William Henry Earl Poulett.

John Francis Erskine Earl of Mar. *(Elected for Scotland.)*

Sholto George Watson Earl of Morton. *(Elected for Scotland.)*

Walter John Francis Earl of Mar and Kellie. *(Elected for Scotland.)*

George Earl of Haddington. *(Elected for Scotland.)*

Frederick Henry Earl of Lauderdale. *(Elected for Scotland.)*

David Stanley William Earl of Airlie. *(Elected for Scotland.)*

Robert Harris Carnwath Earl of Carnwath. *(Elected for Scotland.)*

Ronald Ruthven Earl of Leven and Melville. *(Elected for Scotland.)*

Douglas Mackinnon Baillie Hamilton Earl of Dundonald. *(Elected for Scotland.)*

Sewallis Edward Earl Ferrers.

William Heneage Earl of Dartmouth.

Charles Earl of Tankerville.

Charles Wightwick Earl of Aylesford.

Francis Thomas de Grey Earl Cowper.

Arthur Philip Earl Stanhope.

Thomas Augustus Wolstenholme Earl of Macclesfield.

Douglas Beresford Malise Ronald Earl Graham. *(Duke of Montrose.)*

William Frederick Earl Waldegrave.

Bertram Earl of Ashburnham.

Charles Augustus Earl of Harrington.

Newton Earl of Portsmouth.

Francis Richard Charles Guy Earl Brooke and Earl of Warwick.

Sidney Carr Earl of Buckinghamshire.

William Thomas Spencer Earl Fitzwilliam.

Frederick George Earl of Guilford.

Charles Philip Earl of Hardwicke.

Henry Edward Earl of Ilchester.

Reginald Windsor Earl De La Warr

William Earl of Radnor.

John Poyntz Earl Spencer.

Seymour Henry Earl Bathurst.

Arthur Wills John Wellington Trumbull Blundell Earl of Hillsborough. *(Marquess of Downshire.)*

Edward Hyde Earl of Clarendon.

William David Earl of Mansfield.

John James Hugh Henry Earl Strange. *(Duke of Atholl.)*

William Henry Earl of Mount Edgcumbe.

Hugh Earl Fortescue.

George Edward Stanhope Molyneux Earl of Carnarvon.

George Henry Earl Cadogan.

Edward James Earl of Malmesbury.

John Vansittart Danvers Earl of Lanesborough. *(Elected for Ireland.)*

Henry Ernest Newcomen Earl of Kingston. *(Elected for Ireland.)*

Dermot Robert Wyndham Earl of Mayo. *(Elected for Ireland.)*

Hugh Earl Annesley. *(Elected for Ireland.)*

George Earl of Lucan. *(Elected for Ireland.)*

Somerset Richard Earl of Belmore. *(Elected for Ireland.)*

James Francis Earl of Bandon. *(Elected for Ireland.)*

James Earl of Caledon. *(Elected for Ireland.)*

James Francis Harry Earl of Rosslyn.

William George Robert Earl of Craven.

William Hillier Earl of Onslow.

Charles Earl of Romney.

Walter John Earl of Chichester.

Seymour John Grey Earl of Wilton.

George Charles Earl of Powis.

Horatio Earl Nelson.

Lawrence Earl of Rosse. *(Elected for Ireland.)*

Sydney William Herbert Earl Manvers.

Robert Horace Earl of Orford.

Albert Henry George Earl Grey.

Hugh Cecil Earl of Lonsdale.

Dudley Francis Stuart Earl of Harrowby.

Henry Ulick Earl of Harewood.

Gilbert John Earl of Minto.

Alan Frederick Earl Cathcart.

James Walter Earl of Verulam.

Adelbert Wellington Brownlow Earl Brownlow.

Henry Cornwallis Earl of St. Germans.

Albert Edmund Earl of Morley.

Orlando George Charles Earl of Bradford.

William Earl Beauchamp.

John Earl of Eldon.

Richard William Penn Earl Howe.

George Edward John Mowbray Earl of Stradbroke.

William Stephen Earl Temple of Stowe.

Francis Charles Earl of Kilmorey. *(Elected for Ireland.)*

Charles Stewart Earl Vane. *(Marquess of Londonderry.)*

William Archer Earl Amherst.

John Frederick Vaughan Earl Cawdor.

William George Earl of Munster.

Robert Adam Philips Haldane Earl of Camperdown.

Thomas Francis Earl of Lichfield.

John George Earl of Durham.

Granville George Earl Granville.

Henry Earl of Effingham.

Henry John Earl of Ducie.

Charles Alfred Worsley Earl of Yarborough.

Henry John Earl of Innes. *(Duke of Roxburghe.)*

Thomas William Earl of Leicester.

Ralph Gordon Earl of Lovelace.

Charles William Francis Earl of Gainsborough.

Francis Charles Granville Earl of Ellesmere.

George Henry Charles Earl of Strafford.

Kenelm Charles Edward Earl of Cottenham.

William Henry Earl Cowley.

George Arnulph Earl of Winton. *(Earl of Eglintoun.)*

William Humble Earl of Dudley.

John Francis Stanley Earl Russell.

John Earl of Kimberley.

Richard Earl of Dartrey.

William Ernest Earl of Feversham.

Henry George Earl of Ravensworth.

Edward Montagu Stuart Granville Earl of Wharncliffe.

Thomas George Earl of Northbrook.

Herbert John Earl Cairns.

Victor Alexander George Robert Earl of Lytton.

Edward Earl of Lathom.

George Edward Earl Sondes.

Roundell Earl of Selborne.

Walter Stafford Earl of Iddesleigh.

Cornwallis Earl de Montalt.

William Henry Forester Earl of Londesborough.

Gathorne Earl of Cranbrook.

Gilbert Henry Earl of Ancaster.

Robert Viscount Hereford.

Byron Plantagenet Viscount Falkland. *(Elected for Scotland.)*

Henry Viscount Bolingbroke and St. John.

Charles George Viscount Cobham.

Evelyn Edward Thomas Viscount Falmouth.

George Master Viscount Torrington.

Maurice Viscount Leinster. *(Duke of Leinster.)*

Francis Wheler Viscount Hood.

Mervyn Edward Viscount Powerscourt. *(Elected for Ireland.)*

Henry William Crosbie Viscount Bangor. *(Elected for Ireland.)*

Cornwallis Viscount Hawarden. *(Elected for Ireland.) (In another place as Earl de Montalt.)*

Carnegie Parker Viscount St. Vincent.

Henry Viscount Melville.

William Wells Viscount Sidmouth.

Henry Edward Montagu Dorington Clotworthy Viscount Templeton. *(Elected for Ireland.)*

John Campbell Viscount Gordon. *(Earl of Aberdeen.)*

Edward Fleetwood John Viscount Exmouth.

John Luke George Viscount Hutchinson. *(Earl of Donoughmore.)*

William Frederick Viscount Clancarty. *(Earl of Clancarty.)*

Robert Wellington Viscount Combermere.

Henry Charles Viscount Canterbury.

Rowland Clegg Viscount Hill.

Henry Charles Viscount Hardinge.

George Stephens Viscount Gough.

Charles Lindley Viscount Halifax.

Alexander Nelson Viscount Bridport.

William Henry Berkeley Viscount Portman.

Henry Robert Viscount Hampden.

Garnet Joseph Viscount Wolseley.

William John Viscount Oxenbridge.

Richard Assheton Viscount Cross.

Frederick Bishop of London.

Brooke Foss Bishop of Durham.

Anthony Wilson Bishop of Winchester.

Charles John Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol.

Richard Bishop of Chichester.

William Basil Bishop of St. David's

John Charles Bishop of Liverpool.

Ernest Roland Bishop of Newcastle.

Richard Bishop of Llandaff.

William Bishop of Oxford.

George Bishop of Southwell.

William Boyd Bishop of Ripon.

Edward Bishop of Lincoln.

Edward Henry Bishop of Exeter.

John Bishop of Salisbury.

Alwyne Bishop of Ely.

James Bishop of Manchester.

William Walsham Bishop of Wakefield.

Francis John Bishop of Chester.

Alfred George Bishop of St. Asaph.

Daniel Lewis Bishop of Bangor.

John Wogan Bishop of St. Albans.

John James Stewart Bishop of Worcester.

Randall Thomas Bishop of Rochester.

Charles Robert Lord Carrington, *Lord Chamberlain of the Household.*

Dudley Charles Lord de Ros.

Charles Botolph Joseph Lord Mowbray, Segrave, and Stourton.

George Manners Lord Hastings.

Jack Southwell Lord de Clifford.

Charles Henry Rolle Lord Clinton.

Robert Nathaniel Cecil George Lord Zouche of Haryngworth.

Rawdon George Grey Lord Grey de Ruthyn.

Charles Edward Hastings Lord Botreaux. *(Earl of Loudoun.)*

Francis Robert Lord Camoys.

Miles Lord Beaumont.

Henry Lord Willoughby de Broke.

Herbert George Charles Lord Vaux of Harrowden.

Ralph Gordon Lord Wentworth. *(In another place as Earl of Lovelace.)*

Alfred Thomas Townshend Lord Braye.

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Henry John Philip Sidney Lord Teynham.

Fitzherbert Lord Stafford.

George Frederick William Lord Byron.

Lewis Henry Hugh Lord Clifford of Chudleigh.

Henry de Vere Lord Barnard.

Horace Courtenay Gammell Lord Forbes. *(Elected for Scotland.)*

Alexander William Frederick Lord Saltoun. *(Elected for Scotland.)*

Charles William Lord Sinclair. *(Elected for Scotland.)*

James Walter Lord Torphichen. *(Elected for Scotland.)*

Alexander Hugh Lord Balfour of Burleigh. *(Elected for Scotland.)*

Walter Hugh Lord Polwarth. *(Elected for Scotland.)*

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George Lord Hay. *(Earl of Kinnoul.)*

Digby Wentworth Bayard Lord Middleton.

Frederick George Brabazon Lord Ponsonby. *(Earl of Bessborough.)*

Alfred Nathaniel Holden Lord Scarsdale.

George Florance Lord Boston.

Charles George Lord Lovell and Holland. *(Earl of Egmont.)*

George William Henry Lord Vernon.

Edward Henry Trafalgar Lord Digby.

Martin Bladen Lord Hawke.

Henry Thomas Lord Foley.

Arthur de Cardonnel Lord Dynevor.

Thomas Lord Walsingham.

William Lord Bagot.

Charles Henry Lord Southampton.

John Richard Brinsley Lord Grantley.

George Bridges Harley Dennett Lord Rodney.

Henry George Lord Lovaine. *(Earl Percy.)*

Philip Reginald Lord Somers.

Richard Henry Lord Berwick.

Edward Lennox Lord Sherborne.

John Henry de la Poer Lord Tyrone. *(Marquess of Waterford.)*

Richard Henry Lord Carleton. *(Earl of Shannon.)*

Charles Lord Suffield.

Dudley Wilmot Lord Dorchester.

Lloyd Lord Kenyon.

Charles Cornwallis Lord Braybrooke.

George Augustus Hamilton Lord Fisherwick. *(Marquess of Donegall.)*

Henry Charles Lord Gage. *(Viscount Gage.)*

Thomas John Lord Thurlow.

William Morton Lord Auckland.

Charles George Lord Lyttelton. *(In another place as Viscount Cobham.)*

Henry George Lord Mendip and Dover. *(Viscount Clifden.)*

George Lord Stuart of Castle Stuart. *(Earl of Moray.)*

Alan Plantagenet Lord Stewart of Garlies. *(Earl of Galloway.)*

James George Henry Lord Saltersford. *(Earl of Courtown.)*

William Lord Brodrick. *(Viscount Midleton.)*

Augustus Cholmondeley Lord Calthorpe.

Peter Robert Lord Gwydir.

Charles Robert Lord Carrington. *(In another place as Lord Chamberlain of the Household.)*

William Henry Lord Bolton.

Thomas Lyttleton Lord Lilford.

Thomas Lord Ribblesdale.

John William Lord Dunsany. *(Elected for Ireland.)*

Edward Donough Lord Inchiquin. *(Elected for Ireland.)*

John Thomas William Lord Massy. *(Elected for Ireland.)*

Hamilton Matthew FitzMaurice Lord Muskerry. *(Elected for Ireland.)*

Francis William Lord Kilmaine. *(Elected for Ireland.)*

Luke Gerald Lord Clonbrock. *(Elected for Ireland.)*

Charles Mark Lord Headley. *(Elected for Ireland.)*

Edward Henry Churchill Lord Crofton. *(Elected for Ireland.)*

Hercules Edward Lord Langford. *(Elected for Ireland.)*

Dayrolles Blakeney Lord Ventry. *(Elected for Ireland.)*

Henry O'Callaghan Lord Dunalley. *(Elected for Ireland.)*

Eyre Challoner Henry Lord Clarina. *(Elected for Ireland.)*

John Henry Lord Loftus. *(Marquess of Ely.)*

William Lord Carysfort. *(Earl of Carysfort.)*

George Ralph Lord Abercromby.

Charles Towry Hamilton Lord Ellenborough.

Augustus Frederick Arthur Lord Sandys.

Henry North Lord Sheffield. *(Earl of Sheffield.)*

William Macnaghten Lord Erskine.

George John Lord Monteagle. *(Marquess of Sligo.)*

Bernard Arthur William Patrick Hastings Lord Granard. *(Earl Granard.)*

Alan Hyde Lord Gardner.

John Thomas Lord Manners.

John Adrian Louis Lord Hopetoun. *(Earl of Hopetoun.)*

Charles Lord Meldrum. *(Marquess of Huntly.)*

Lowry Egerton Lord Grinstead. *(Earl of Enniskillen.)*

William Hale John Charles Lord Foxford. *(Earl of Limerick.)*

Victor Albert Francis Charles Lord Churchill.

George Robert Canning Lord Harris.

Reginald Charles Edward Lord Colchester.

Schomberg Henry Lord Ker. *(Marquess of Lothian.)*

Henry Francis Lord Minster. *(Marquess of Conyngham.)*

James Edward William Theobald Lord Ormonde. *(Marquess of Ormonde.)*

Francis Richard Lord Wemyss. *(Earl of Wemyss.)*

John Strange Lord Clanbrassil. *(Earl of Roden.)*

Thomas Lord Silchester. *(Earl of Longford.)*

Clotworthy John Eyre Lord Oriel. *(Viscount Massereene.)*

Hugh Lord Delamere.

Cecil Theodore Lord Forester.

John William Lord Rayleigh.

Edric Frederic Lord Gifford.

Herbert George Lord Somerhill. *(Marquess of Clanricarde.)*

James Ludovic Lord Wigan. *(Earl of Crawford.)*

Uchter John Mark Lord Ranfurly. *(Earl of Ranfurly.)*

John Byrne Leicester Lord de Tabley.

Charles Stewart Henry Lord Tenterden.

William Conyngham Lord Plunket.

William Frederick Lord Heytesbury.

Archibald Philip Lord Rosebery. *(Earl of Rosebery.) (In another place as Lord President of the Council.)*

Richard James Lord Clanwilliam. *(Earl of Clanwilliam.)*

William Draper Mortimer Lord Wynford.

Charles Gore Lord Kilmarnock. *(Earl of Errol.)*

Arthur James Lord Fingall. *(Earl of Fingall.)*

William Philip Lord Sefton. *(Earl of Sefton.)*

Charles Lord Clements. *(Earl of Leitrim.)*

Geoffrey Thomas Lord Kenlis. *(Marquess of Headfort.)*

Reginald Lord Chaworth. *(Earl of Meath.)*

Charles Adolphus Lord Dunmore. *(Earl of Dunmore.)*

Augustus Frederick George Warwick Lord Poltimore.
Llewellyn Nevill Vaughan Lord Mostyn.
Henry Spencer Lord Templemore.
Valentine Frederick Lord Cloncurry.
James St. Vincent Lord de Saumarez.
Thomas Lord Denman.
James Yorke Macgregor Lord Abinger.
Philip Lord de l'Isle and Dudley.
Francis Denzil Edward Lord Ashburton.
Edward George Percy Lord Hatherton.
Archibald Brabazon Sparrow Lord Worlingham. *(Earl of Gosford.)*
Hallyburton George Lord Stratheden.
Geoffrey Dominick Augustus Frederick Lord Oranmore and Browne. *(Elected for Ireland.)*
Simon Joseph Lord Lovat.
William Bateman Lord Bateman.
Algernon Hawkins Thomond Lord Kintore. *(Earl of Kintore.)*
George Ponsonby Lord Lismore. *(Viscount Lismore.)*
Derrick Warner William Lord Rossmore.
Robert Shapland George Julian Lord Carew.
Charles Frederick Ashley Cooper Lord de Mauley.
Arthur Lord Wrottesley.
Charles Douglas Richard Lord Sudeley.
Paul Sanford Lord Methuen.
Henry Edward John Lord Stanley of Alderley.
William Henry Lord Leigh.
Beilby Lord Wenlock.
William Lord Lurgan.
Thomas Spring Lord Monteagle of Brandon.
John Reginald Upton Lord Seaton.
John Manley Arbuthnot Lord Keane.
John Lord Oxenfoord. *(Earl of Stair.)*
George Crespigny Brabazon Lord Vivian.
Henry William Lord Congleton.
Victor Alexander Lord Elgin. *(Earl of Elgin and Kincardine.)*
Thomas Montague Morrison Lord Truro.
Arthur Lord de Freyne.
Edward Burtenshaw Lord St. Leonards.
George Fitz-Roy Henry Lord Raglan.
Valentine Augustus Lord Kenmare. *(Earl of Kenmare.)*
Henry Lord Belper.
Richard Wogan Lord Talbot de Malahide.
Robert Wellesley Lord Ebury.
Charles Compton William Lord Chesham.
Frederick Augustus Lord Chelmsford.
John Lord Churston.
Henry Lord Leconfield.
Wilbraham Lord Egerton.
Godfrey Charles Lord Tredegar.
Fitz-Patrick Henry Lord Lyveden.
Henry Charles Lord Brougham and Vaux.
Arthur Fitz-Gerald Lord Kinnaird.
Richard Luttrell Pilkington Lord Westbury.
Francis William Fitzhardinge Lord Fitzhardinge.
Luke Lord Annaly.
Robert Offley Ashburton Lord Houghton
John Gaspard Le Marchant Lord Romilly.
James Herbert Gustavus Meredyth Lord Meredyth. *(Lord Athlumney.)*
Windham Thomas Lord Kenry. *(Earl of Dunraven and Mount-Earl.)*
Henry Power Charles Stanley Lord Monck. *(Viscount Monck.)*
John Major Lord Hartismere. *(Lord Henniker.)*
Hedworth Hylton Lord Hylton.
George Sholto Gordon Lord Penrhyn.
Gustavus Russell Lord Brancepeth. *(Viscount Boyne.)*
John Henry Lord Kesteven.
Arthur Lord Ormathwaite.
Edward Lord O'Neill.
Robert William Lord Napier.
Jenico William Joseph Lord Gormanston. *(Viscount Gormanston.)*
Thomas Kane Lord Rathdonnell. *(Elected for Ireland.)*

John Hamilton Lord Lawrence.
James Plaisted Lord Penzance.
John Lord Dunning. *(Lord Rollo.)*
James Lord Balinhard. *(Earl of Southesk.)*
William Lord Hare. *(Earl of Listowel.)*
Francis Edward Lord Howard of Glossop.
Bernard Edward Burnaby Lord Castletown.
John Emerish Edward Lord Acton.
Thomas Charles Lord Robartes.
Frederick Lord Wolverton.
Algernon William Fulke Lord Greville.
Thomas Townley Lord O'Hagan.
William Lord Sandhurst.
Francis Lord Ettrick. *(Lord Napier.)*
James Charles Herbert Welbore Ellis Lord Somerton. *(Earl of Normanton.)*
Henry Austin Lord Aberdare.
James Lord Moncreiff.
Bernard John Seymour Lord Coleridge.
Thomas William Gaston Lord Emly.
Chichester Samuel Lord Carlingford. *(Lord Clermont.)*
Thomas Francis Lord Cottesloe.
Herbert Perrott Murray Lord Hampton.
Charles Alexander Lord Douglas. *(Earl of Home.)*
Arthur George Maule Lord Ramsay. *(Earl of Dalhousie.)*
John Henry Lord Fermanagh. *(Earl of Erne.)*
William Richard Lord Harlech.
Henry Gerard Lord Alington.
Wilbraham Frederic Lord Tollemache.
William Cansfield Lord Gerard.
Lionel Sackville Lord Sackville.
Colin Lord Blackburn.
Charles Bowyer Lord Norton.
Percy Lord Shute. *(Viscount Barrington.)*
William Lord Watson. *(A Lord of Appeal in Ordinary.)*
Lawrence Hesketh Lord Haldon.
Ivor Bertie Lord Wimborne.
Arthur Edward Lord Ardilaun.
Charles Wallace Alexander Napier Lord Lamington.
Charles Frederick Lord Donington.
Arthur Edwin Lord Trevor.
Montagu William Lord Rowton.
Edward Lord Brabourne.
Arthur Oliver Villiers Lord Ampthill.
William Montagu Lord Tweeddale. *(Marquess of Tweeddale.)*
William Ulick Tristram Lord Howth. *(Earl of Howth.)*
Donald James Lord Reay.
Harcourt Lord Derwent.
Henry James Lord Hothfield.
Edward Lord Tweedmouth. *(In another place as Lord Privy Seal.)*
Frederick Beauchamp Paget Lord Alcester.
Hallam Lord Tennyson.
James Lord Strathspey. *(Earl of Seafield.)*
John George Lord Monk Bretton.
Walter Henry Lord Northbourne.
Arthur Saunders William Charles Fox Lord Sudley. *(Earl of Arran.)*
John Robert William Lord de Vesci. *(Viscount de Vesci.)*
Marmaduke Francis Lord Herries.
Hardinge Stanley Lord Halsbury.
Mervyn Edward Lord Powerscourt. *(In another place as Viscount Powerscourt.)*
Anthony Henley Lord Northington. *(Lord Henley.)*
Nathaniel Mayer Lord Rothschild.
Edward Charles Lord Revelstoke.
Robert Lord Monkswell.
Arthur Lord Hobhouse.
Ralph Robert Wheeler Lord Lingen.
Edward Lord Ashbourne.
Rowland Lord St. Oswald.
Robert James Lord Wantage.
William Baliol Lord Esher.
Robert Wilfrid Lord Deramore.

Henry John Lord Montagu of Beaulieu.
Sidney Herbert Lord Elphinstone.
Charles John Lord Colville of Culross.
Farrer Lord Herschell. *(In another place as Lord High Chancellor.)*
Charles Henry Lord Hillington.
Samuel Charles Lord Hindlip.
Edmund Lord Grimthorpe.
Richard de Aquila Lord Stalbridge.
William Lord Kensington.
Michael Arthur Lord Burton.
John Glencairn Carter Lord Hamilton of Dalzell.
Thomas Lord Brassey.
Henry Lord Thring.
Edward Lord Macnaghten. *(A Lord of Appeal in Ordinary.)*
Robert Lord Connemara.
Claude Lord Bowes. *(Earl of Strathmore and Kinghorne.)*
George Edmund Milnes Lord Monckton. *(Viscount Galway.)*
John Lord St. Levan.
James Douglas Lord Magheramorne.
William George Lord Armstrong.
George Limbrey Lord Basing.
William Henry Lord de Ramsey.
William Meriton Lord Cheylesmore.
Egerton Lord Addington.
Henry Thurstan Lord Knutsford.
John Lord Savile.
Michael Lord Morris. *(A Lord of Appeal in Ordinary.)*
William Ventris Lord Field.
Edward Cecil Lord Iveagh.
George Lord Mount Stephen.
Samuel Lord Masham.
Frederick Sleigh Lord Roberts of Kandahar.
Arthur William Acland Lord Hood of Avalon.
William Lord Kelvin.
Henry John Lord Rookwood.
Evelyn Lord Cromer.
Alexander Burns Lord Shand.
George Lord Ashcombe.
Rainald Lord Knightley.
Archibald Campbell Lord Blythswood.
Thomas Lord Crawshaw.
William Amhurst Lord Amherst of Hackney.
William John Lord Newton.
John Lord Dunleath.
John Allan Lord Llangattock.
Lyon Lord Playfair.
Cyril Lord Battersea.
Ernest Ambrose Lord Swansea.
Thomas Henry Lord Farrer.
John Campbell Lord Overtoun.
Cecil George Savile Lord Hawkesbury.
Arthur Lord Stanmore.
Stuart Lord Rendel
Reginald Earle Lord Welby.
Charles Lord Russell of Killowen.
Horace Lord Davey. *(A Lord of Appeal in Ordinary.)*

LIST OF THE COMMONS.

THE NAMES OF MEMBERS

Returned to serve in the Twenty-fifth Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, summoned to meet at Westminster the Fourth Day of August, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Ninety-two, as by the Several Returns filed in the Office of the Clerk of the Crown in Chancery appears. Corrected to the Meeting of the Parliament on the Fifth Day of February, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Ninety-five.

ENGLAND.

BEDFORDSHIRE.

Northern (or Biggleswade) Division.
George William Erskine Russell.

Southern (or Luton) Division.
Samuel Howard Whitbread.

BEDFORD BOROUGHS.
Samuel Whitbread.

BERKSHIRE.

Northern (or Abingdon) Division.
Philip Wroughton.

Southern (or Newbury) Division.
William George Mount.

Eastern (or Wokingham) Division.
Sir George Russell, Bart.

READING BOROUGH.
George William Palmer.

WINDSOR (NEW) BOROUGH.
Francis Tress Barry.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

Northern (or Buckingham) Division.
Herbert Samuel Leon.

Mid (or Aylesbury) Division.
Baron Ferdinand James de Rothschild.

Southern (or Wycombe) Division.
Viscount Curzon.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

Northern (or Wisbech) Division.
Hon. Arthur George Brand.

Western (or Chesterton) Division.
Hugh Edward Hoare.

Eastern (or Newmarket) Division.
Sir George Newnes, Bart.

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY.
Richard Claverhouse Jebb.
Right Hon. Sir John Eldon Gorst, Knt.

CAMBRIDGE BOROUGH.
Robert Uniacke Penrose Fitzgerald.

CHESHIRE.

Wirral Division.
Colonel Edward Thomas Davenant Cotton-Jodrell.

Eddisbury Division.
Henry James Tollemache.

Macclesfield Division.
William Bromley Davenport.

Crewe Division.
Walter Stowe Bright McLaren.

Northwich Division.
John Tomlinson Brunner.

Altrincham Division.
Coningsby Ralph Disraeli.

CHESHIRE—*cont.*

HYDE DIVISION.
Joseph Watson Sidebotham.

KNUTSFORD DIVISION.
Hon. Alan de Tatton Egerton.

BIRKENHEAD BOROUGH.
Elliott Lees.

CHESTER BOROUGH.
Robert Armstrong Yerburgh.

STOCKPORT BOROUGH.
Sir Joseph Leigh, Knt.
George Whiteley.

CORNWALL.

WESTERN (OR ST. IVES) DIVISION.
Thomas Bedford Bolitho.

NORTH-WESTERN (OR CAMBORNE) DIVISION.
Charles Augustus Vansittart Conybeare.

TRURO DIVISION.
John Charles Williams.

MID (OR ST. AUSTELL) DIVISION.
William Alexander McArthur.

SOUTH-EASTERN (OR BODMIN) DIVISION.
Right Hon. Leonard Henry Courtney.

NORTH-EASTERN (OR LAUNCESTON) DIVISION.
Thomas Owen.

PENRYN AND FALMOUTH BOROUGH.
William George Cavendish Bentinck.

CUMBERLAND.

NORTHERN (OR ESKDALE) DIVISION.
Robert Andrew Allison.

MID (OR PENRITH) DIVISION.
James William Lowther.

COCKERMOUTH DIVISION.
Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Bart.

WESTERN (OR EGREMONT) DIVISION.
David Ainsworth.

CARLISLE BOROUGH.
William Court Gully.

WHITEHAVEN BOROUGH.
Thomas Shepherd Little.

DERBYSHIRE.

HIGH PEAK DIVISION.
William Sidebottom.

NORTH-EASTERN DIVISION.
Thomas Dolling Bolton.

CHESTERFIELD DIVISION.
Thomas Bayley.

WESTERN DIVISION.
Victor Christian William Cavendish.

MID DIVISION.
James Alfred Jacoby.

ILKESTON DIVISION.
Sir Balthazar Walter Foster, Knt.

SOUTHERN DIVISION.
Harrington Evans Broad.

DERBY BOROUGH.
Right Hon. Sir William George Granville Venables Vernon Harcourt, Knt.
Sir Thomas Roe, Knt.

DEVONSHIRE.

EASTERN (OR HONITON) DIVISION.
Sir John Henry Kennaway, Bart.

NORTH-EASTERN (OR TIVERTON) DIVISION.
Colonel Sir William Hood Walrond, Bart.

NORTHERN (OR SOUTH MOLTON) DIVISION.
George Lambert.

NORTH-WESTERN (OR BARNSTAPLE) DIVISION.
Alfred Billson.

WESTERN (OR TAVISTOCK) DIVISION.
Hugh Courtenay Fownes Luttrell.

SOUTH (OR TOTNES) DIVISION.
Francis Bingham Mildmay.

TORQUAY DIVISION.
Richard Mallock.

MID (OR ASHBURTON) DIVISION.
Right Hon. Charles Seale-Hayne.

DEVONPORT BOROUGH.
Hudson E. Kearley.
Edward John Chalmers Morton.

DEVONSHIRE—*cont.*

EXETER BOROUGH.

Hon. Sir Henry Stafford Northcote, Bart.

PLYMOUTH BOROUGH.

Sir Edward George Clarke, Knt.
Sir William George Pearce, Bart.

DORSETSHIRE.

NORTHERN DIVISION.

John Kenelm Digby Wingfield-Digby.

EASTERN DIVISION.

Hon. Humphrey Napier Sturt.

SOUTHERN DIVISION.

William Ernest Brymer.

WESTERN DIVISION.

Henry Richard Farquharson.

DURHAM.

JARROW DIVISION.

Sir Charles Mark Palmer, Bart.

HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING DIVISION.

Captain Henry Thomas Fenwick.

CHESTER-LE-STREET DIVISION.

Sir James Joicey, Bart.

NORTH-WESTERN DIVISION.

Llewellyn Archer Atherley-Jones.

MID DIVISION.

John Wilson.

SOUTH-EASTERN DIVISION.

Joseph Richardson.

BISHOP AUCKLAND DIVISION.

James Mellor Paulton.

BARNARD CASTLE DIVISION.

Sir Joseph Whitwell Pease, Bart.

DARLINGTON BOROUGH.

Sir Theodore Fry, Bart.

DURHAM BOROUGH.

Matthew A. Fowler.

GATESHEAD BOROUGH.

William Allan.

HARTLEPOOLS (THE) BOROUGH.

Christopher Furness.

SOUTH SHIELDS BOROUGH.

James Cochran Stevenson.

DURHAM—*cont.*

STOCKTON BOROUGH.

Thomas Wrightson.

SUNDERLAND BOROUGH.

Samuel Storey.
Edward Temperley Gourley.

ESSEX.

SOUTH-WESTERN (OR WALTHAMSTOW) DIVISION.

Edmund Widdrington Byrne.

SOUTHERN (OR ROMFORD) DIVISION.

Alfred Money-Wigram.

WESTERN (OR EPPING) DIVISION.

Colonel Amelius Richard Mark Lockwood.

NORTHERN (OR SAFFRON WALDEN) DIVISION.

Right Hon. Herbert Colstoun Gardner.

NORTH-EASTERN (OR HARWICH) DIVISION.

James Round.

EASTERN (OR MALDON) DIVISION.

Cyril Joseph Settle Dodd.

MID (OR CHELMSFORD) DIVISION.

Thomas Usborne.

SOUTH-EASTERN DIVISION.

Major Frederic Carne Rasch.

COLCHESTER BOROUGH.

[*Vacant.*]

WEST HAM BOROUGH.

North Division.

Thomas Newcomen Archibald Grove.

South Division.

James Keir Hardie.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

MID (OR STROUD) DIVISION.

David Brynmor Jones.

NORTHERN (OR TEWKESBURY) DIVISION.

Sir John Edward Dorington, Bart.

EASTERN (OR CIRENCESTER) DIVISION.

Harry Lawson Webster Lawson.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE—*cont.*

FOREST OF DEAN DIVISION.
Right Hon. Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke, Bart.

SOUTHERN (OR THORNBURY) DIVISION.
Charles Edward Hungerford Athole Colston.

BRISTOL BOROUGH.
West Division.
Right Hon. Sir Michael Edward Hicks-Beach, Bart.

North Division.
Charles Townsend.

East Division.
Sir Joseph Dodge Weston, Knt.

South Division.
Colonel Sir Edward Stock Hill, K.C.B.

CHELTENHAM BOROUGH.
James Tynte Agg-Gardner.

GLOUCESTER BOROUGH.
Sir Thomas Robinson, Knt.

HAMPSHIRE.

NORTHERN (OR BASINGSTOKE) DIVISION.
Arthur Frederick Jeffreys.

WESTERN (OR ANDOVER) DIVISION.
William Wither Bramston Beach.

EASTERN (OR PETERSFIELD) DIVISION.
William Wickham.

SOUTHERN (OR FAREHAM) DIVISION.
General Sir Frederick Wellington John FitzWygram, Bart.

NEW FOREST DIVISION.
Hon. John Walter Edward Douglas Scott-Montagu.

CHRISTCHURCH BOROUGH.
Abel Henry Smith.

PORTSMOUTH BOROUGH.
Sir John Baker, Knt.
Walter Owen Clough.

SOUTHAMPTON BOROUGH.
Tankerville Chamberlayne.
Sir Francis Henry Evans, K.C.M.G.

WINCHESTER BOROUGH.
William Henry Myers.

ISLE OF WIGHT.
Sir Richard Everard Webster, Knt.

HEREFORDSHIRE.

NORTHERN (OR LEOMINSTER) DIVISION.
James Rankin.

SOUTHERN (OR ROSS) DIVISION.
Michael Biddulph.

HEREFORD BOROUGH.
Charles Wallwyn Radcliffe Cooke.

HERTFORDSHIRE.

NORTHERN (OR HITCHIN) DIVISION.
George Bickersteth Hudson.

EASTERN (OR HERTFORD) DIVISION.
Abel Smith.

MID (OR ST. ALBANS) DIVISION.
Vicary Gibbs.

WESTERN (OR WATFORD) DIVISION.
Thomas Frederick Halsey.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE.

SOUTHERN (OR HUNTINGDON) DIVISION.
Arthur Hugh Smith-Barry.

NORTHERN (OR RAMSEY) DIVISION.
Hon. Ailwyn Edward Fellowes.

KENT.

WESTERN (OR SEVENOAKS) DIVISION.
Henry William Forster.

NORTH-WESTERN (OR DARTFORD) DIVISION.
Right Hon. Sir William Hart-Dyke, Bart.

SOUTH-WESTERN (OR TUNBRIDGE) DIVISION.
Arthur Sackville Trevor Griffith-Boscawen.

MID (OR MEDWAY) DIVISION.
Charles Edward Warde.

NORTH-EASTERN (OR FAVERSHAM) DIVISION.
Hon. Herbert Thomas Knatchbull-Hugessen.

SOUTHERN (OR ASHFORD) DIVISION.
Laurence Hardy.

EASTERN (OR ST. AUGUSTINE'S) DIVISION.
Right Hon. Aretas Akers-Douglas.

ISLE OF THANET DIVISION.
Right Hon. James Lowther.

KENT—*cont.*

CANTERBURY BOROUGH.
John Henniker Heaton.

CHATHAM BOROUGH.
Colonel Lewis Vivian Loyd.

DEPTFORD BOROUGH.
Charles John Darling.

DOVER BOROUGH.
George Wyndham.

GRAVESEND BOROUGH.
James Dampier Palmer.

GREENWICH BOROUGH.
Thomas William Boord.

HYTHE BOROUGH.
Sir Edward William Watkin, Bart.

LEWISHAM BOROUGH.
John Penn.

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH.
Francis Stanley Wykeham Cornwallis.

ROCHESTER BOROUGH.
Viscount Cranborne.

WOOLWICH BOROUGH.
Colonel Edwin Hughes.

LANCASHIRE.

North Lancashire.

NORTH LONSDALE DIVISION.
William Smith.

LANCASTER DIVISION.
James Williamson.

BLACKPOOL DIVISION.
Right Hon. Sir Matthew White Ridley, Bart.

CHORLEY DIVISION.
General Randle Joseph Feilden.

North-east Lancashire.

DARWEN DIVISION.
Charles Philip Huntington.

CLITHEROE DIVISION.
Right Hon. Sir Ughtred James Kay-Shuttleworth, Bart.

ACCRINGTON DIVISION.
Joseph Francis Leese.

ROSSENDALE DIVISION.
John Henry Maden.

LANCASHIRE—*cont.*

South-east Lancashire.

WESTHOUGHTON DIVISION.
Lord Edward George Villiers Stanley.

HEYWOOD DIVISION.
Thomas Snape.

MIDDLETON DIVISION.
Charles Henry Hopwood.

RADCLIFFE-CUM-FARNWORTH DIVISION
Robert Leake.

ECCLES DIVISION.
Henry John Roby.

STRETFORD DIVISION.
John William Maclure.

GORTON DIVISION.
William Mather.

PRESTWICH DIVISION.
Robert Gray Cornish Mowbray.

South-west Lancashire.

SOUTHPORT DIVISION.
Hon. George Nathaniel Curzon.

ORMSKIRK DIVISION.
Right Hon. Arthur Bower Forwood.

BOOTLE DIVISION.
Colonel Thomas Myles Sandys.

WIDNES DIVISION.
John Saunders Gilliat.

NEWTON DIVISION.
Hon. Thomas Wodehouse Legh.

INCE DIVISION.
Samuel Woods.

LEIGH DIVISION.
Caleb Wright.

ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE BOROUGH.
John Edmund Wentworth Addison.

BARROW-IN-FURNESS BOROUGH.
Charles William Cayzer.

BLACKBURN BOROUGH.
William Henry Hornby.
William Coddington.

BOLTON BOROUGH.
Herbert Shepherd-Cross.
Colonel the Hon. Francis Charles Bridgeman.

Lancashire—*cont.*

BURNLEY BOROUGH.

Hon. Philip James Stanhope.

BURY BOROUGH.

Right Hon. Sir Henry James, Knt.

LIVERPOOL BOROUGH.

Kirkdale Division.

Sir George Smyth Baden-Powell, K.C.M.G.

Walton Division.

James Henry Stock.

Everton Division.

John Archibald Willox.

West Derby Division.

Walter Hume Long.

Scotland Division.

Thomas Power O'Connor.

Exchange Division.

Ralph Neville.

Abercromby Division.

William Frederic Lawrence.

East Toxteth Division.

Right Hon. Baron Henry de Worms.

West Toxteth Division.

Robert Paterson Houston.

MANCHESTER BOROUGH.

North-west Division.

Sir William Henry Houldsworth, Bart.

North Division.

Charles Ernest Schwann.

North-east Division.

Right Hon. Sir James Fergusson, Bart.

East Division.

Right Hon. Arthur James Balfour.

South Division.

Sir Henry Enfield Roscoe, Knt.

South-west Division.

Right Hon. Jacob Bright.

OLDHAM BOROUGH.

Joshua Milne Cheetham.
Right Hon. Sir John Tomlinson Hibbert, K.C.B.

PRESTON BOROUGH.

Robert William Hanbury.
William Edward Murray Tomlinson.

ROCHDALE BOROUGH.

Thomas Bayley Potter.

Lancashire—*cont.*

SALFORD BOROUGH.

North Division.

William Henry Holland.

West Division.

Lees Knowles.

South Division.

Sir Henry Hoyle Howorth, K.C.I.E.

ST. HELENS BOROUGH.

Henry Seton-Karr.

STALYBRIDGE BOROUGH.

Tom Harrop Sidebottom.

WARRINGTON BOROUGH.

Robert Pierpoint.

WIGAN BOROUGH.

Sir Francis Sharp Powell, Bart.

LEICESTERSHIRE.

Eastern (or Melton) Division.

Marquess of Granby.

Mid (or Loughborough) Division.

Jabez Edward Johnson-Ferguson.

Western (or Bosworth) Division.

Charles Benjamin Bright McLaren.

Southern (or Harborough) Division.

John William Logan.

LEICESTER BOROUGH.

Henry Broadhurst.
Walter Hazell.

LINCOLNSHIRE.

West Lindsey (or Gainsborough) Division.

Joseph Bennett.

North Lindsey (or Brigg) Division.

John Maunsell Richardson.

East Lindsey (or Louth) Division.

Robert William Perks.

South Lindsey (or Horncastle) Division.

Lord Willoughby d'Eresby.

North Kesteven (or Sleaford) Division.

Right Hon. Henry Chaplin.

LINCOLNSHIRE—*cont.*

SOUTH KESTEVEN (OR STAMFORD) DIVISION.

Henry John Cokayne Cust.

HOLLAND (OR SPALDING) DIVISION.

Halley Stewart.

BOSTON BOROUGH.

Sir William James Ingram, Bart.

GRANTHAM BOROUGH.

Henry Yarde Buller Lopes.

GREAT GRIMSBY BOROUGH.

Right Hon. Edward Heneage.

LINCOLN BOROUGH.

William Crosfield.

MIDDLESEX.

ENFIELD DIVISION.

Captain Henry Ferryman Bowles.

TOTTENHAM DIVISION.

Joseph Howard.

HORNSEY DIVISION.

Henry Charles Stephens.

HARROW DIVISION.

William Ambrose.

EALING DIVISION.

Right Hon. Lord George Francis Hamilton.

BRENTFORD DIVISION.

James Bigwood.

UXBRIDGE DIVISION.

Sir Frederick Dixon Dixon-Hartland, Bart.

BETHNAL GREEN BOROUGH.

North-east Division.

George Howell.

South-west Division.

Edward Hare Pickersgill.

CHELSEA BOROUGH.

Charles Algernon Whitmore.

FINSBURY BOROUGH.

Holborn Division.

Sir Charles Hall, K.C.M.G.

Central Division.

Dadabhai Naoroji.

East Division.

James Rowlands.

MIDDLESEX—*cont.*

FULHAM BOROUGH.

William Hayes Fisher.

HACKNEY BOROUGH.

North Division.

William Robert Bousfield.

Central Division.

Sir Andrew Richard Scoble, K.C.S.I.

South Division.

John Fletcher Moulton.

HAMMERSMITH BOROUGH.

General William Tuckfield Goldsworthy.

HAMPSTEAD BOROUGH.

Edward Brodie Hoare.

ISLINGTON BOROUGH.

North Division.

George Christopher Trout Bartley.

West Division.

Thomas Lough.

East Division.

Benjamin Louis Cohen.

South Division.

Sir Albert Kaye Rollit, Knt.

KENSINGTON BOROUGH.

North Division.

Frederick Charlwood Frye.

South Division.

Sir Algernon Borthwick, Bart.

LONDON UNIVERSITY.

Right Hon. Sir John Lubbock, Bart.

MARYLEBONE BOROUGH.

East Division.

Edmund Boulnois.

West Division.

Sir Frederick Seager Hunt, Bart.

PADDINGTON BOROUGH.

North Division.

John Aird.

South Division.

[*Vacant.*]

ST. GEORGE'S, HANOVER SQUARE.

Right Hon. George Joachim Goschen.

ST. PANCRAS BOROUGH.

North Division.

Thomas Henry Bolton.

MIDDLESEX—St. Pancras Borough—*cont.*

East Division.

Robert Grant Webster.

West Division.

Henry Robert Graham.

South Division.

Sir Julian Goldsmid, Bart.

SHOREDITCH BOROUGH.

Hoxton Division.

James Stuart.

Haggerston Division.

William Randal Cremer.

STRAND BOROUGH.

Hon. William Frederick Danvers Smith.

TOWER HAMLETS BOROUGH.

Whitechapel Division.

Sir Samuel Montagu, Bart.

St. George's Division.

John Williams Benn.

Limehouse Division.

John Stewart Wallace.

Mile End Division.

Spencer Charrington.

Stepney Division.

Frederick Wootton Isaacson.

Bow and Bromley Division.

John Archibald Murray Macdonald.

Poplar Division.

Sydney Charles Buxton.

WESTMINSTER BOROUGH.

William Lehmann Ashmead-Bartlett Burdett-Coutts.

LONDON CITY.

Sir Reginald Hanson, Bart.
Alban George Henry Gibbs.

MONMOUTHSHIRE.

NORTHERN DIVISION.

Thomas Phillips Price.

WESTERN DIVISION.

Cornelius Marshall Warmington.

SOUTHERN DIVISION.

Colonel the Hon. Frederick Courtenay Morgan.

MONMOUTH BOROUGHS.

Albert Spicer.

NORFOLK.

NORTH-WESTERN DIVISION.

Joseph Arch.

SOUTH-WESTERN DIVISION.

Thomas Leigh Hare.

NORTHERN DIVISION.

Herbert Hardy Cozens-Hardy.

EASTERN DIVISION.

Robert John Price.

MID DIVISION.

Clement Higgins.

SOUTHERN DIVISION.

Francis Taylor.

GREAT YARMOUTH BOROUGH.

James Marshall Moorsom.

KING'S LYNN BOROUGH.

Thomas Gibson Bowles.

NORWICH BOROUGH.

Samuel Hoare.
Jeremiah James Colman.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

NORTHERN DIVISION.

Right Hon. Lord Burghley.

EASTERN DIVISION.

Francis Allston Channing.

MID DIVISION.

Right Hon. Charles Robert Spencer.

SOUTHERN DIVISION.

David Charles Guthrie.

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH.

Henry Labouchere.
Sir Moses Philip Manfield.

PETERBOROUGH BOROUGH.

Alpheus Cleophas Morton.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

WANSBECK DIVISION.

Charles Fenwick.

TYNESIDE DIVISION.

Joseph Albert Pease.

HEXHAM DIVISION.

Miles MacInnes.

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED DIVISION.

Sir Edward Grey, Bart.

NORTHUMBERLAND—*cont.*

MORPETH BOROUGH.

Thomas Burt.

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE BOROUGH.

Charles Frederick Hamond.
Right Hon. John Morley.

TYNEMOUTH BOROUGH.

Richard Sim Donkin.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.

BASSETLAW DIVISION.

Sir Frederick George Milner, Bart.

NEWARK DIVISION.

Viscount Newark.

RUSHCLIFFE DIVISION.

John Edward Ellis.

MANSFIELD DIVISION.

John Carvell Williams.

NOTTINGHAM BOROUGH.

West Division.

Colonel Charles Seeley.

East Division.

Right Hon. Arnold Morley.

South Division.

Henry Smith Wright.

OXFORDSHIRE.

NORTHERN (OR BANBURY) DIVISION.

Sir Bernhard Samuelson, Bart.

MID (OR WOODSTOCK) DIVISION.

Godfrey Rathbone Benson.

SOUTHERN (OR HENLEY) DIVISION.

Hon. Francis Parker.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY.

Right Hon. Sir John Robert Mowbray, Bart.
John Gilbert Talbot.

OXFORD BOROUGH.

General Sir George Tomkyns Chesney, K.C.B.

RUTLANDSHIRE.

George Henry Finch.

SHROPSHIRE (SALOP).

WESTERN (OR OSWESTRY) DIVISION.

Stanley Leighton.

SHROPSHIRE—*cont.*

NORTHERN (OR NEWPORT) DIVISION.

Colonel William Slaney Kenyon-Slaney.

MID (OR WELLINGTON) DIVISION.

Alexander Hargreaves Brown.

SOUTHERN (OR LINCOLN) DIVISION.

Robert Jasper More.

SHREWSBURY BOROUGH.

Henry David Greene.

SOMERSETSHIRE.

NORTHERN DIVISION.

Thomas Courtenay Theydon Warner.

WELLS DIVISION.

Colonel Sir Richard Horner Paget, Bart.

FROME DIVISION.

John Emmott Barlow.

EASTERN DIVISION.

Henry Hobhouse.

SOUTHERN DIVISION.

Edward Strachey.

BRIDGWATER DIVISION.

Edward James Stanley.

WESTERN (OR WELLINGTON) DIVISION.

Sir Alexander Fuller-Acland Hood, Bart.

BATH BOROUGH.

Colonel Charles Wyndham Murray.
Edmond Robert Wodehouse.

TAUNTON BOROUGH.

Hon. Alfred Percy Allsopp.

STAFFORDSHIRE.

LEEK DIVISION.

Charles Bill.

BURTON DIVISION.

Sydney Evershed.

WESTERN DIVISION.

Hamar Alfred Bass.

NORTH-WESTERN DIVISION.

James Heath.

LICHFIELD DIVISION.

Major Leonard Darwin.

KINGSWINFORD DIVISION.

Right Hon. Alexander Staveley Hill.

STAFFORDSHIRE—*cont.*

HANDSWORTH DIVISION.

Sir Henry Meysey Meysey-Thompson, Bart.

HANLEY BOROUGH.

William Woodall.

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH.

William Allen.

STAFFORD BOROUGH.

Charles Edward Shaw.

STOKE-UPON-TRENT BOROUGH.

George Granville Leveson-Gower.

WALSALL BOROUGH.

Sir Arthur Divett Hayter, Bart.

WEDNESBURY BOROUGH.

Wilson Lloyd.

WEST BROMWICH BOROUGH.

Ernest Spencer.

WOLVERHAMPTON BOROUGH.

West Division.

Sir Alfred Hickman, Knt.

East Division.

Right Hon. Henry Hartley Fowler.

South Division.

Right Hon. Charles Pelham Villiers.

SUFFOLK.

NORTHERN (OR LOWESTOFT) DIVISION.

Harry Seymour Foster.

NORTH-EASTERN (OR EYE) DIVISION.

Francis Seymour Stevenson.

NORTH-WESTERN (OR STOWMARKET) DIVISION.

Sydney James Stern.

SOUTH (OR SUDBURY) DIVISION.

William Cuthbert Quilter.

SOUTH-EASTERN (OR WOODBRIDGE) DIVISION.

Robert Lacey Everett.

BURY ST. EDMUNDS BOROUGH.

Viscount Chelsea.

IPSWICH BOROUGH.

Sir Charles Dalrymple, Bart.
Lord Elcho.

SURREY.

NORTH-WESTERN (OR CHERTSEY) DIVISION.

Charles Harvey Combe.

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Election Expenses and the Payment of Members—Questions, Mr. G. C. T. Bartley, Mr. S. Woods, Mr. Burnie, and Mr. J. H. Dalziel; Answers, Chancellor of the Exchequer 565

Government Business:—

Resolved: "That Government business have precedence this day and to-morrow."—(*Chancellor of the Exchequer.*) 566

MOTIONS.

Bills presented and read First Time:—

Corporate Associations Property Bill—(93) 566
Sports Regulation Bill—(94) 566
Commissioners of Sewers of the City of London (Baths and Washhouses Bill—(95) 566
Joint Stock Companies Register Bill—(96) 566
Crofters Holdings (Scotland) Act Amendment Bill—(97) 566
Jurors' Payment Bill—(98) 567
Cases Stated (Appeal) (Ireland) Bill—(99) 567
Trustee Act (1893) Amendment Bill—(100) 567
Borough Funds Act (1872) Amendment Bill—(101) 567
Poor Law Amendment Bill—(102) 567
Game Bill—(102) 567

ORDER OF THE DAY.

Address in Answer to Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech—

ADJOURNED DEBATE :—Amendment proposed to add the following to the Address—

"And we humbly pray that Your Majesty will be graciously pleased to direct Your Majesty's Ministers to so adjust the financial relations between the United Kingdom and British India, with regard to all the expenditure incurred in the employment of Europeans in the British-Indian Services, Civil and Military, in this Country and in India, that some fair and adequate portion of such expenditure should be borne by the British Exchequer in proportion to the pecuniary and political benefits accruing to the United Kingdom from Your Gracious Majesty's sway over India; and that the British Treasury should sustain a fair and equitable portion of all expenditure incurred on all military and political operations beyond the boundaries of India in which both Indian and British interests are jointly concerned."—*(Mr. Naoroji.)* 567

DEBATE FOLLOWING—

Sir W. Wedderburn ... 579
Secretary of State for India 582
Sir D. H. Macfarlane ... 591
Mr. J. Seymour Keay ... 592
Mr. W. S. Caine 593
Mr. G. N. Curzon 594
Mr. A. Webb 597
Sir R. Temple... 598

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn 601

Colonel Nolan moved to add to the Address :—

"And we humbly express our regret that Your Majesty's Gracious Speech did not contain a reference to the severe distress existing in some parts of Ireland, and failed to convey an assurance that public works would be undertaken to alleviate such distress." 601

DEBATE FOLLOWING—

Mr. T. Sexton 604
Mr. W. Field 608
Mr. T. W. Russell ... 609
Mr. J. Dillon 610
Mr. Bodkin 613
Chief Secretary for Ireland 614
Mr. D. Crilly 622
Mr. J. G. Swift MacNeill 625
Mr. William Redmond ... 629
Mr. S. Storey 631
Mr. J. Gilhooly 633
Mr. L. P. Hayden 633
Mr. T. D. Sullivan 634
Mr. C. Diamond 635
Chief Secretary for Ireland ... 635

House divided :—Ayes, 13; Noes, 200.—(Division List, No. 3.) ... 636

MOTIONS.

Local Government (Scotland) Act (1894) Amendment Bill.

Motion for Second Reading—(*Mr. G. B. Renshaw.*) 633
Mr. T. M. Healy ... 636
Lord Advocate 636

Second Reading deferred 636

COMMONS: WEDNESDAY, 13TH FEBRUARY 1895.

MOTIONS.

UNEMPLOYED (THE) :—Motion made—

"That a Select Committee be appointed to consider and report as to—(*a*) The extent to which distress, arising from want of employment, prevails; (*b*) the powers at present possessed by Local Authorities in relation to such cases; and (*c*) any steps which may be taken, whether by changes in legislation or administration, to deal with the evils arising therefrom." —*(The Chief Secretary for Ireland.)* 637

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Amendment proposed, in paragraph (b), after the word "authorities," to insert the words "or Departments of State."—*(Mr. Keir Hardie.)* 637

Amendment, by leave withdrawn. 637

Amendment made in paragraph (b) by inserting, after the word "local," the words "or central." 637

Another Amendment proposed, at the end of the Question, to add the words—

"(d) To make an interim Report to the House on or before Monday, 25th February, on what steps should be taken either by Parliament, the Department of State, or Local Authorities to meet the distress this winter."—*(Mr. Keir Hardie).* 638

Chancellor of the Exchequer	639	*Mr. P. M. Thornton*	640
Sir J. E. Gorst	639	*Mr. Keir Hardie*	641
Mr. J. W. Benn	640	*Sir A. K. Rollit*	641
Sir D. H. Macfarlane ...	640		

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment, in line 1, to leave out the words "on or before Monday 25th February," and insert the words "at the earliest possible date."—*(Mr. Macdonald.)* 641

Chancellor of the Exchequer 641

Question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the proposed Amendment," put, and negatived. 641

Words inserted in the proposed Amendment. 641

Question, "That the words '(d) To make an interim Report to the House at the earliest possible date on what steps should be taken either by Parliament, the Departments of State, or local authorities, to meet the distress this winter' be there added," put, and agreed to. 641

Sir T. Fry	641	*Mr. T. Gibson Bowles*... ...	642
Mr. William Allan ...	642	*Mr. Cyril J. S. Dodd* ...	642
Chancellor of the Exchequer	642	*Mr. T. M. Healy*	643

Motion, as amended, agreed to. 643

ORDER OF THE DAY.

Address in Answer to Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech.—

Adjourned Debate.—Amendment proposed, to add the following words:—

"And we humbly represent to Your Majesty, that the time has come when the cases of all prisoners convicted under the Treason Felony Act who are, and have been for many years, undergoing punishment for offences arising out of insurrectionary movements connected with Ireland, may be advantageously reconsidered."—*(Mr. J. J. Clancy.)* 643

Debate following—

Home Secretary	651	*Mr. J. Caldwell*	668
Chief Secretary for Ireland	655	*Mr. T. Harrington*	670
Dr. J. E. Kenny... ...	657	*Sir E. Clarke*	672
Mr. C. H. Hopwood ...	661	*Mr. H. J. Wilson*	677
Mr. T. W. Russell ...	664	*Mr. T. M. Healy*	678
Mr. M. Austin	664	*Mr. William Redmond* ...	684
Mr. D. Crawford ...	665	*Mr. W. P. Byles*	687
Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien ...	666		

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Motion made, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—*(Mr. T. Sexton.)* 688
Chancellor of the Exchequer 688 *Mr. John Redmond* 688
Mr. Sexton 688

The House divided :—Ayes 79 ; Noes 286. [Division List No. 4] 688

Question again proposed, "That those words be there added."—Debate arising. And it being after half-past Five of the Clock, the Debate stood adjourned 688

MOTIONS.

LEICESTER ELECTION WRITS :—Motion made 689

"That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire and report on the Returns made to this House to the two Writs issued on August 22nd, 1894, for the return of Members to serve for the Borough of Leicester, and the circumstances attending the holding of the election; and whether the case is such as to require further action in respect of such Returns on the part of the House."—(*Sir Henry James.*) 689

Mr. T. M. Healy ... 689 *Sir Henry James* 690

Debate adjourned, to be resumed to-morrow.

Local Government (Scotland) Act (1894) Amendment Bill.—Read second time... 690

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES—
Select Committee appointed—*(Sir A. K. Rollit)* 691

BILLS PRESENTED AND READ FIRST TIME.
Merchant Shipping Acts Amendment Bill (104). 691
Merchant Shipping Acts Amendment (No. 2) Bill (105). 691
Wine and Beerhouse Acts Amendment Bill (106). 691
Licensing Acts Amendment Bill (107). 692

COURSE OF BUSINESS—*Mr. G. C. T. Bartley* 692
Mr. T. M. Healy ... 692 *Mr. T. E. Ellis* 692

LORDS : THURSDAY, 14TH FEBRUARY.

UGANDA—*Lord Stanmore moved for Papers* 693

DEBATE FOLLOWING—*Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs* 695
Marquess of Salisbury ... 698 *Lord Stanmore* 705
First Lord of the Treasury 702 *Earl of Kimberley* 706

Motion agreed to 706

COMMONS : THURSDAY, 14TH FEBRUARY.

MOTIONS.

London Valuation and Assessment Bill ; Order for First Reading.
Sir Henry James 706
Mr. J. Stuart ... ... 707 *Mr. Speaker* 708
Bill withdrawn 710

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QUESTIONS.

British Imports into Turkey and Japan—Question, Col. Howard Vincent; Answer, Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs 711
Naval Expenditure in Ireland—Questions, Sir T. Esmonde, Capt. Donelan, Mr. J. Flynn, and Mr. Crean; Answers, Civil Lord of the Admiralty 712
Irish Fisheries—Questions, Sir T. Esmonde, Capt. Donelan, Mr. Maurice Healy, and Mr. Gilhooly; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland ... 712
New Quays in Kerry—Question, Sir T. Esmonde; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland 715
Hours of Prison Warders—Questions, Mr. T. Harrington and Dr. Kenny; Answers, Chief Secretary for Ireland 715
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Vaccination—Question, Mr. Channing; Answer, Home Secretary ... 717
Twiss, Execution of John—Questions, Dr. Kenny, Mr. Harrington, Mr. Vesey-Knox, and Mr. William Redmond; Answers, Chief Secretary for Ireland, Mr. [Speaker] 717
Londonderry Barracks—Questions, Mr. Jordan and Mr. Hanbury; Answers, Secretary of State for War 720
Inclosed Post Cards and Invoices—Question, Mr. James Rowlands; Answer, Postmaster General 720
Royal Marines—Question, Mr. Arnold Forster; Answer, Civil Lord of the Admiralty 721
Saving Life at Sea—Question, Mr. C. H. Wilson; Answer, President of the Board of Trade... 721
Unemployed in Liverpool—Question, Mr. Keir Hardie; Answer, Home Secretary 722
Anglo-French West African Agreement—Question, Colonel Howard Vincent; Answer, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs 722
High Sheriff of Cork City—Questions, Captain McCalmont, Mr. Maurice Healy, and Dr. Kenny; Answers, Chief Secretary for Ireland 722
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KING OF ASHANTI—Question, Mr. Labouchere; Answer, Under Secretary of State for the Colonies 750
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Flogging in the Indian Army—Question, Mr. R. W. Hanbury; Answer, Secretary of State for India 754

Pacific Cable—Question, Sir G. Baden-Powell; Answer, Under Secretary of State for the Colonies 755

Alleged Poisoning of Cattle—Questions, Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. J. Ross, and Mr. W. Redmond; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland, Mr. Speaker 755

Mining Explosives—Question, Mr. S. Woods; Answer, Home Secretary... 756

Unemployed Committee—Questions, Mr. J. H. Lewis and Mr. Keir Hardie; Answer, Chancellor of the Exchequer 757

Irish Fee Grant—Question, Mr. Vesey Knox; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland 758

Inquiry at Belfast Workhouse—Question, Mr. M'Cartan; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland 758

Command of Troops in Case of Riot—Question, Sir A. K. Rollit; Answer, Secretary of State for War 759

Sound Signals in Fog—Questions, Sir Donald Currie and Mr. T. G. Bowles; Answers, President of the Board of Trade 759

Rifle Range for Seamen—Question, Admiral Field; Answer, Civil Lord of the Admiralty 760

ORDER OF THE DAY.

Address in Answer to Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech.

Adjourned Debate—on Mr. Clancy's Amendment to Address (13 February, see page 643) resumed.

Amendment proposed to add to the Amendment the following words—
"Having special regard to the extent of the penalties provided by more recent legislation for the specific offences of which these prisoners were convicted: and also to the sentences actually imposed in several cases of a similar kind."—*(Mr. Bodkin)* 760

Debate following—*Chancellor of the Exchequer* 763

Mr. T. Sexton ...	764	*Mr. John Redmond* ...	774
Mr. R. Wallace ...	771	*Mr. A. Illingworth* ...	776
Mr. Henry Matthews ...	773	*Mr. T. Lough* ...	776

Amendment to Proposed Amendment agreed to 777

Division Bells—Mr. Speaker 777

Division on Amendment—Ayes, 111; Noes, 299. [Division Lists No. 5] 777

Debate on Address *continued*—Appointment of County Magistrates:—

Amendment proposed—

"And we humbly express our regret that Your Majesty has been unable to inform this House that the Resolution of this House of the 5th of May 1893, relating to the Appointment of County Magistrates, has been fully carried out by Your Majesty's present advisers."—*(Mr. A. C. Morton.)* 778

Debate following—*Chancellor of the Exchequer* 780

Mr. Cyril Dodd...	780	*Mr. A. C. Morton* ...	782

Amendment withdrawn 782

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FURTHER AMENDMENT PROPOSED :—THE MAAMTRASNA PRISONERS—
"And we humbly assure Your Majesty that the present peaceful condition of Ireland affords a fitting opportunity for an inquiry into the circumstances attending the trial and conviction of certain prisoners at present suffering penal servitude in Ireland, known as the Maamtrasna prisoners."—*(Mr. T. Harrington)* 782

DEBATE FOLLOWING—*Mr. W. Field* 801
Chief Secretary for Ireland 801
Mr. J. Redmond 805

AMENDMENT, by leave, withdrawn 806

FURTHER AMENDMENT PROPOSED—RULE OF THE ROAD AT SEA—
"And we humbly represent to Your Majesty that the Order in Council made by Your Majesty, upon the recommendation of the Board of Trade with the concurrence of the Admiralty, on the 30th day of January, 1893, is calculated seriously to increase the dangers of the sea, and we humbly pray that Your Majesty will be graciously pleased to rescind that Order; and we further humbly pray that Your Majesty will be graciously pleased to refuse assent to the recommendation to Your Majesty, of the Board of Trade with the concurrence of the Admiralty, that Your Majesty should make an Order in Council to carry into effect the revised regulations for preventing collisions at sea, as communicated to shipowners by the Board of Trade Circular of March 6, 1894."—*(Mr. T. Gibson Bowles.)* 806

President of the Board of Trade 816

AMENDMENT, by leave, withdrawn; Debate adjourned 818

LEICESTER ELECTION WRITS—

ADJOURNED DEBATE—*Mr. Timothy Healy* 818
Sir Henry James 818

Debate adjourned 819

MOTIONS.

Plumbers' Registration Bill.

MOTION FOR SECOND READING—*Mr. Lees Knowles* 819
Mr. W. E. M. Tomlinson 819

Debate adjourned 820

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LORDS: FRIDAY, 15TH FEBRUARY 1895.

Local Government Scotland Act (1894) Amendment Bill—(Brought from the Commons)—(*Lord Privy Seal*).—Read 1ª. **(No. 15.)** 821

Licensing Act Amendment Bill—[H.L.]—(*Presented by Earl of Wemyss*).—Read 1ª. **(No. 16.** 821

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STAMPS IN INDIA—Question, Mr. Henniker Heaton; Answer, Postmaster General 822

IRISH MACKEREL FISHERY—Question, Mr. J. C. Flynn; Answer, Chief Secretary for Ireland 823

SMALL-POX AND IRISH NATIONAL SCHOOLS—Questions, Mr. C. H. Hopwood, Mr. T. Sexton, and Mr. W. Johnston; Answers, Chief Secretary for Ireland 823

PARCEL POST—Questions, Mr. Henniker Heaton and Colonel Lockwood; Answers, Postmaster General 825

WATER SUPPLY AT WINCHESTER—Question, Mr. W. Wickham; Answer, Financial Secrtary to the War Office 826

"ELBE," LOSS OF THE—Questions, Sir J. Leng and Mr. H. S. Foster; Answers, President of the Board of Trade 826

IMPORT DUTIES ON CURED MACKEREL—Question, Mr. J. C. Flynn; Answer, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs 828

ARMENIAN COMMISSION—Questions, Mr. F. A. Channing and Mr. C. E. Schwann; Answers, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs 828

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MOTIONS.

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ORDER OF THE DAY.

Address in Answer to Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech—

ADJOURNED DEBATE.—Amendment proposed:—

"And we humbly represent to Your Majesty that it is contrary to the public interest that, under the guidance of Your Majesty's Advisers, the time of Parliament should be occupied in the discussion of measures which, according to their own statements, there is no prospect of passing into law, while proposals involving grave constitutional changes have been announced on which the judgment of Parliament should be taken without delay."
[*Mr. J. Chamberlain.*] 847

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Sir Henry James 1069
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Mr. J. Stuart 1070
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Sir J. Blundell Maple ... 1070
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Mr. R. G. Webster ... 1071
Mr. J. Fletcher Moulton ... 1071
Mr. J. Chamberlain 1071
Sir J. Blundell Maple ... 1072
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MOTIONS.

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Address for Return (*Sir W. Wedderburn*) 1117

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POST OFFICE NOMINATIONS—Motion made :—

"That, in the opinion of this House, it is expedient that Post Office nominations, which are now made by the Treasury on the recommendation of Members of Parliament and others, should in future be made to the Postmaster General by local representative bodies."—*(Mr. Luttrell.)* 1118

DEBATE FOLLOWING—*(Mr. J. Rankin)* 1121

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out after the word 'may' to the end of the sentence, in order to insert "by the Postmaster General in the same way as other appointments in his Department.'"—*(Captain J. Sinclair.)* 1122

Sir C. Cameron 1122
Mr. M. Biddulph ... 1123
Postmaster General ... 1123
Mr. W. L. Jackson ... 1125
Sir A. K. Rollit ... 1126
Mr. J. Chamberlain ... 1128
Mr. H. E. Kearley ... 1129
Mr. C. Diamond ... 1130
Sir W. Hart-Dyke ... 1130
Postmaster General ... 1131
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Sir D. H. Macfarlane ... 1132
Mr. H. L. W. Lawson ... 1132
Mr. G. C. T. Bartley... ... 1133
Sir W. Wedderburn 1133
Mr. H. T. Knatchbull-Hugessen 1133
Mr. J. W. Crombie 1134
Mr. W. Thorburn 1134

AMENDMENT agreed to ; Motion as amended, by leave, withdrawn ... 1134

Resolved :—

"That, in the opinion of this House, it is expedient that Post Office appointments to which nominations are now made by the Treasury on the recommendation of Members of Parliament should, in future, be made by the Postmaster General in the same way as other appointments in the Department."—*(Postmaster General.)* ... ... — 1134

Importation of Foreign-Made Goods :—Motion made :

"That, in the opinion of this House, it is incumbent upon Her Majesty's Government, in the interests of the industrial classes of the United Kingdom, at once to take steps to restrict the importation of goods made in Foreign Prisons by the enforced labour of convicts and felons."—*(Col. Howard Vincent.)* 1135

DEBATE FOLLOWING—

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Mr. Cyril Dodd 1142
Mr. W. C. Quilter ... 1143
Mr. J. Lowther 1145
Mr. W. E. M. Tomlinson 1146
Mr. S. Hoare 1147
Mr. G. Wyndham ... 1148
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Mr. J. Chamberlain ... 1155
Chief Secretary for Ireland 1161
Mr. C. B. Stuart-Wortley 1164
Sir A. K. Rollit 1165
Mr. W. R. Cremer 1166
Mr. T. W. Russell 1168
Mr. J. Pinkerton 1169
Mr. P. A. Muntz 1169
Mr. Arnold-Forster 1170
Mr. J. C. Macdona 1172
Mr. J. Powell-Williams ... 1172
Mr. J. Keir Hardie 1173
Mr. A. Cross 1174
Mr. A. J. Balfour 1175
Mr. J. C. Flynn 1178

Motion agreed to. 1179

Shops Early Closing Bill.—Read 2°, and referred to Select Committee.—*(Sir J. Lublock.)* 1179

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Cheap Trains (London) Bill:—Motion made—
"That the Bill be now read 2°."—*(Sir J. B. Maple.)* 1179
Mr. Deputy Speaker 1179
Consideration of Bill deferred until 20th February.

Lands Valuation (Scotland) Acts Amendment Bill:—Motion made—
"That the Bill be now read 2°."—*(Sir J. Carmichael.)* 1180
Sir Charles J. Pearson ... 1180
Lord Advocate 1181
Mr. W J. Caldwell. 1182
Motion agreed to 1182

Sport Regulation Bill:—Motion made— 1182
"That the Bill be now read 2°."—*(Mr. A. C. Morton.)* 1182
Viscount Cranborne ... 1182
Mr. H. C. F. Luttrell. ... 1183
Mr. Elliott Lees 1184
Debate adjourned 1185

Seed Potatoes Supply (Ireland) Bill—[No. 117.]—Order for Second Reading read.
Mr. G. C. T. Bartley ... 1185
Chief Secretary for Ireland 1186
Mr. T. W. Russell ... 1186
Dr. Tanner 1186
Mr. T. Sexton 1186
Mr. D. Crilly 1187
Mr. M. M. Bodkin 1188
Bill read 2°. 1188

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Glasgow Corporation and Police Bill.—Read 2°.
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Mr. E. Wason 1189
Mr. Speaker 1189

Rating of Machinery Bill:—Motion made—
"That this Bill be read a second time."—*(Sir W. H. Houldsworth.)* ... 1190
DEBATE FOLLOWING—
Major Rasch 1194
Mr. A. F. Jeffreys ... 1195
Mr. M. Oldroyd 1197
Sir R. Paget 1199
President of the Local Government Board ... 1202
Mr. Tomlinson 1204
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Mr. Albert Spicer 1226
Solicitor General 1227
Division—Ayes, 185; Noes, 134. [Divison List No. 8.] 1230
Motion made—
"That this Bill be referred to the Grand Committee on Trade."—*(Sir W. H. Houldsworth.)* 1230

Amendment proposed—
"That the Bill be referred to a Select Commiteee."—*(Sir R. H. Paget.)* ... 1230
Mr. S. T. Evans ... 1230
Sir A. K. Rollit 1231
Mr. J. Powell-Williams ... 1231
President of the Local Government Board 1232
Mr. James Lowther 1232

Division—Ayes, 139; Noes, 175. [Division List No. 9.] Bill referred to the Standing Committee on Trade 1232

Lodger Franchise Bill—Motion made—
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Mr. W. Ambrose 1233
Debate adjourned 1234

Seed Potatoes Supply (Ireland) Bill.—[No. 117.]
CONSIDERED IN COMMITTEE—
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Dr. Tanner 1234
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Seed Potatoes Supply (Ireland) [Remuneration] Bill.
CONSIDERED IN COMMITTEE.—Resolution authorising payment of moneys agreed to; to be reported to-morrow 1235

MOTIONS.

Rule of the Road at Sea:—Motion made—
"That a Select Committee be appointed to consider the objections which have been raised to the adoption by Order in Council of Rule 15 of the revised International Regulations for preventing collisions at sea, dealing with sound signals in fog, as suggested by the Washington Conference, and considered by the maritime Powers.—*(Sir Donald Currie.)* 1235
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Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1894, Amendment Bill.—(No. 15.) Read 3ª (according to Order), and passed 1237

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THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(*Authorised Edition*)

IN THE

FOURTH SESSION OF THE *TWENTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT* OF
THE UNITED KINGDOM OF *GREAT BRITAIN* AND *IRELAND*,
APPOINTED TO MEET AUGUST 4, 1892, IN THE FIFTY-SIXTH YEAR OF
THE REIGN OF

HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA.

FIRST VOLUME OF SESSION 1895.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, 5th February 1895.

THE PARLIAMENT, which had been prorogued from Saturday, the 25th day of August 1894, met this day for the despatch of business.

The Session was opened by Commission.

The HOUSE of PEERS being met,

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House,

"That Her Majesty not thinking it fit to be present here this day, has been pleased to cause a Commission to be issued under the Great Seal in order to the opening and holding of this Parliament."

Then Five LORDS COMMISSIONERS—namely, The Lord Chancellor (Lord Herschell), Earl Spencer, Lord Tweedmouth, The Marquess of Breadalbane, and Lord Carrington (being in their Robes, and seated on a bench placed between the Throne and the Woolsack) commanded the Yeoman Usher of the Black Rod to let the Commons know that—

"The Lords Commissioners desire their immediate attendance in this House to hear the Commission read."

Who being at the Bar, with their Speaker:—

The Commission was read by the Clerk:—Then—

THE QUEEN'S SPEECH.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR delivered HER MAJESTY'S MOST GRACIOUS SPEECH to both Houses of Parliament as follows:—

My Lords, and Gentlemen,

"My relations with foreign Powers remain on a friendly and satisfactory footing.

An Agreement has been concluded, after protracted negotiations, between my Government and that of the French Republic for the settlement of the frontier between my Colony of Sierra Leone and the neighbouring French possessions.

I regret to say that the war between China and Japan still continues. I have

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

maintained a close and cordial understanding with the Powers interested in those regions, and shall lose no favourable opportunity of promoting a peaceful termination of the contest.

In consequence of reports which reached my Government of excesses committed by Turkish troops, regular or irregular, on Armenians in a district of Asia Minor, I thought it right, in conjunction with other Powers, to make representations to the Porte. The Sultan has declared his intention of severely punishing any of his officers or soldiers who have been guilty of such acts, and has sent a Commission to conduct an investigation on the spot. Delegates from the Powers which have Consuls at Erzeroum will accompany this Commission.

Gentlemen of the House of Commons,

The Estimates for the year will be laid before you without delay.

My Lords, and Gentlemen,

I am happy to observe the striking fact that in Ireland offences of all kinds against the law have sunk during the past year to the lowest level hitherto marked in official records.

Proposals will be submitted to you for remedying defects which experience has brought to light in the working of the Law of Landlord and Tenant in Ireland; and for dealing with certain evicted tenants, whose situation still constitutes a peril to social order.

A Bill will be presented to you dealing with the Church Establishment in Wales.

Bills will also be laid before you having for their object the popular control of the Liquor Traffic; the abolition of plural voting; and provision for the payment of the charges of the Returning Officers at elections.

The Commission which I issued in 1893 to report on the best means of unifying the Government of the Metropolis has presented its Report, and a Bill will be laid before you founded on its recommendations.

I regret that Agriculture continues in a seriously depressed condition. This subject is still under the consideration of the Commission which I appointed in the Autumn of 1893. In the meantime, a proposal will be submitted to you for facilitating the construction of Light Railways, a measure which will, I trust, be found beneficial to the rural districts.

Bills will also be presented for the promotion of conciliation in trade disputes, and for the amendment of the Factory Acts.

You will be asked to consider measures for the completion of the system of County Government in Scotland, and for further legislation in respect of the Crofter population in that country.

I pray that the blessing of Almighty God may rest upon your arduous and responsible labours."

Then the Commons withdrew.

House adjourned during pleasure.

ROLL OF THE LORDS.

Garter King of Arms attending, delivered at the Table (in the usual manner) a List of the Lords Temporal in the Fourth Session of the Twenty-fifth Parliament of the United Kingdom: The same was ordered to lie on the Table.

The House resumed at 20 minutes past 4 o'clock.

SAT FIRST.

The Earl of Derby—after the death of his brother.

The Earl Grey—after the death of his uncle.

The Duke of Somerset—after the death of his father.

The Marquess of Ailesbury—after the death of his nephew.

The Earl of Albemarle—after the death of his father.

The Viscount Hardinge—after the death of his father.

Randall Thomas, Lord Bishop of Rochester—was (in the usual manner) introduced.

DISMISSAL OF IRISH OFFICIALS.

Lord ASHBOURNE: I beg to give notice that on Monday next I will call attention to the dismissal of the President of Queen's College, Galway, and of the President and Chairman of the Irish Prisons Board, and move for the production of papers.

WINDING-UP CASES.
PERSONAL EXPLANATION BY THE LORD CHANCELLOR.

The LORD CHANCELLOR: My Lords, I deeply regret to have to interpose before this House proceeds to the ordinary course of business to-day, but I am quite sure that your Lordships will grant me indulgence while I make a personal statement. During the last two weeks grave imputations of misconduct have been made against me. If they had touched me alone I should not have troubled your Lordships at the present time, but they relate to my discharge of the duties of the high office which I hold. If they were true I should be unworthy to remain Speaker of this House. I am told that they are unchallenged and uncontradicted. It seemed to me that the proper place in which to challenge and contradict them was in this House, over whose deliberations I have the honour to preside, and I seize the earliest opportunity of doing so. My Lords, the charges relate to my action in relation to the proceedings in winding-up Companies which are in liquidation. All that I have done can be briefly told. In the year 1892 the hearing of these causes was assigned to Mr. Justice Vaughan Williams by my noble and learned Friend who preceded me. In the summer of that year difficulties arose owing to the learned Judge's absence on circuit, and an arrangement was made by which he was replaced during his absence by Mr. Justice A. L. Smith. In the following year, 1893, similar difficulties arose, and strong representations were made to me on the subject. I received communications from the Incorporated Law Society and from the Bar Committee, and it occurred to me that the difficulty might be met by an arrangement under which another Judge should be named who, in the absence of Mr. Justice Vaughan Williams, might take the winding-up cases. That arrangement was made with the full concurrence of both of the Judges concerned, Mr. Justice Vaughan Williams and Mr. Justice Wright. In the summer of last year, when the circuit arrangements had been made, I found that both those learned Judges were going circuit, and a new arrangement became absolutely necessary. Mr. Justice Romer, during that circuit, undertook to hear these cases. The suggestion that he should do so came from Mr. Justice Vaughan Williams himself. When on the present occasion Mr. Justice Vaughan Williams was again to be absent from London on circuit duties, I asked Mr. Justice Romer, and he assented, to take the cases now which he had taken before. My Lords, that is all I have done, and it is now practically admitted that as regards anything I have done no complaint can be made. But it is said "the complaint is not of what you have done, but that you contemplated a more permanent transfer of these causes, and that you contemplated it, not on grounds of public policy, but from corrupt and discreditable motives." My Lords, it is, I think, somewhat unusual for a public man to be called on to explain, not anything he has done, not anything he has announced his intention of doing, but something which it is said he contemplated doing. But as in nothing I have done, so in nothing I have contemplated doing is there any occasion for me to fear the light. There is just this grain of truth, and this alone, in all the statements that have been made, that the expediency of a more permanent transfer of winding-up cases has been under consideration. Of course such a change contemplated on public grounds alone would involve no discredit to anyone, even if opinions might differ as to its expediency. But as it has been stated that corrupt motives, and not regard for the public interest, dictated its consideration, it is necessary, in order to meet these base charges, that I should state the facts which forced me to consider the expediency of the change. My Lords, when the Winding-up Act was passed these cases were heard by the several Judges of the Chancery Division. In the year 1892 my noble and learned Friend who preceded me in this office assigned the hearing of these cases, under the powers conferred on him by the Act, to Mr. Justice Vaughan Williams. At that time, as my noble and learned Friend will no doubt remember, apprehensions were expressed by some that this change might give rise to difficulty when the Judge was on circuit; and, in addition to this, some thought it might interfere with the due progress of the business in the Queen's Bench Division. But there were public grounds which seemed to my noble and learned Friend at that time—and I do not for a moment suggest he was wrong—to render it expedient that the cases should be assigned in the manner in which he assigned them. But the circuit difficulty soon presented itself, and, as I have already told your Lordships, on the first occasion on which there was a circuit after this assignment of causes, another Judge—Mr. Justice A. L. Smith—took the place of Mr. Justice Vaughan Williams. In the Spring of the following year the same difficulties were experienced, and considerable complaints were made to me that winding-up cases were not heard with the speed and continuousness that was desirable. My Lords, the learned Judge to whom the work had been assigned made the most strenuous efforts to avoid, as far as possible, any inconvenience arising from his absence on circuit. He came up frequently from great distances on spare days to discharge the duties assigned to him; and I desire to pay my fullest tribute to the energy and zeal he displayed to render the inconvenience to the public as small as possible. Nevertheless that inconvenience was felt, and the strongest representations were made to me of the necessity of a change, by the Bar Committee and by the Incorporated Law Society. It was impossible in the face of these representations not to recognise that an evil existed for which a remedy was to be found. As I have said, I asked another Judge—Mr. Justice Wright—to assist, so that when Mr. Justice Vaughan Williams was on circuit Mr. Justice Wright might hear these cases. At the same time I expressed a hope that it might be possible to arrange so that both those Judges should never be absent on circuit at the same time, and the learned Judges told me they thought it would be possible to secure such an arrangement—in which case, of course, all that was desired would have been accomplished, and matters would have gone quite smoothly. It is right I should state here, in consequence of some observations that have been made, that it does not rest with me what Judges shall go circuit or what circuits they shall go. The practice from time immemorial has been for the Judges in rotation to select their own circuit. It is a matter of arrangement between them. If a Judge whose turn has arisen to go circuit remains in London, another takes his place. With that I could not interfere. All I could do, of course, was to make any suggestions that occurred to me from time to time. Well, my Lords, in the summer of last year I saw from the Assize List that both Judges were to leave town, I think on the same day, or almost on the same day, and that they would be absent for several weeks. Upon that I inquired whether an arrangement could not be made by which one of them should remain in town. I found that was not possible, apparently, and consequently, as something had to be done, this business was undertaken during the summer of last year by Mr. Justice Romer. When I communicated to the Bar Committee the arrangement made, Sir Henry James, writing on their behalf, used this language:—

> "The Bar Committee desire to express some doubt whether the step mentioned in your letter which the Lord Chancellor suggests may be taken to remedy the existing evil will adequately do so."

On behalf of the Committee he called my attention to the joint report of February, 1892, as pointing out the measures which the joint committee thought were desirable to meet the now admitted evil. The Bar Committee, therefore, at that time, notwithstanding the arrangement I had made, reiterated that view. But, of course, if the difficulty had not arisen from both Judges being absent on circuit, I should have remained perfectly content with the arrangement that had been made. The cases were heard by Mr. Justice Romer, and it was found that he could discharge the duties which that work involved without interfering with the other duties which he had to discharge as a Judge of the Chancery Division. At that time another difficulty confronted me. Mr. Justice Barnes, one of the Judges of the Probate Division, was ill and absent, and I found that that illness was likely to last a considerable time. It has lasted down to the present time. I rejoice to think that the learned Judge is recovering, and that we may hope to see him again discharging his duties. The consequence was, that the President of the Probate Division made the most pressing suggestions to me that I should endeavour to arrange for his assistance by one of the Judges of the Queen's Bench Division. I communicated with the Lord Chief Justice on the subject, and one of the Judges of the Queen's Bench Division took his place. This, of course, interfered with the arrangements of the Queen's Bench Division, and it certainly then did occur to me whether there might not be relief to that Division by assigning the work which was then being done by a Judge of the Queen's Bench Division to a Judge of the Chancery Division, there being two additional reasons for supporting such a change; the one was, that the absence of the Judge from the Queen's Bench Division seriously interfered with new arrangements, made in the public interest, to secure the continuous presence at particular seasons of a certain number of Judges, and the other being that the work of the Chancery Division by that time was in a state so satisfactory that I thought that the time, which would be occupied by allotting this company work to a Judge of the Chancery Division, might well be spared from the time which was required for the ordinary duties of that Division. Upon this I had confidential communication with Mr. Justice Vaughan Williams and Mr. Justice Romer, but beyond this nothing was done. The change was not definitely determined, but whilst the reasons in its favour seemed to me, and still seem to me, to be weighty, I was not unconscious that there were grave arguments on the other side; and before the present controversy arose, before these articles were written, before these attacks were made, I had determined—and I had communicated that determination to my secretary, whose duty it would have been to draw up the Order if I had come to the conclusion that I should make one—to leave matters as they were at present. My Lords, I have now stated the facts. What are the charges? It is said that there was friction between the Lord Chancellor and Mr. Justice Vaughan Williams in regard to the action of the latter in the New Zealand Loan case; that the sacrifice of Mr. Justice Vaughan Williams was definitely intended to be carried into effect; and that the contemplated removal of this strong and able Judge, from a position which he was filling to the entire satisfaction of the mercantile community and the legal profession, was resolved upon—partly in consequence of his conduct in the matter I have mentioned, and partly owing to the apprehension that he would act in the same way in other matters which are now pending in his Court. Now this involves two charges. The first is, that I acted from resentment of what the learned Judge had done; and the second, that I desired to screen some one. Both of these charges are absolutely and utterly untrue. I will deal with them separately. I have told your Lordships what led me to consider the question whether it would be well to make a change. Is there any one that cannot see that there may be motives—perfectly creditable motives and inspired by a desire for the public interest—sufficient to induce me to consider such a matter? I certainly had no such motive as resentment on account of what the learned Judge had done. No such mean or ridiculous thought ever crossed my mind for a moment. There was no friction between me and the learned Judge in regard to the New Zealand case. The only communications I have ever had with the learned Judge in respect to the winding up of companies have been on points of general application. I believe in most of the cases it was on the learned Judge's request that I sought a conference with him. The conferences we had on those points were throughout of a friendly character, and I believe that our views on the points which we discussed did not substantially differ. My Lords, the opinion which was delivered by Mr. Justice Vaughan Williams on the New Zealand case was delivered on May 8. It was some time after that that I asked him if he could not arrange to get some one to go circuit for him in order that he might remain in town and continue his duties in regard to the winding up of Companies. That was after the time it is said that this resentment was in my mind because of the action of Mr. Justice Vaughan Williams in certain cases. I never entertained the question until it was brought to my notice, under the circumstances I have stated, on August 25, on which day I consulted with the learned Judge on the subject. It was never in my mind to remove these cases from the learned Judge or to transfer them to any one else against his will. If I had the power to do it—a question I will not now enter into—nothing would have been further from my thoughts than that if the learned Judge, after due consideration, differed from me, and if he did not see as I saw that it was for the public good—even if I had the power to do it, I would hesitate long indeed as to disputing his desires and wishes and removing the business from him. But no such contingency ever arose. So much for the first point. The next is that it was partly owing to the apprehension that the learned Judge would act in the same way in other matters now pending in the Court. My Lords, I knew nothing ; I know nothing of other matters pending in the Court. I have not the slightest idea what matters are pending there at this day. I had no idea either when the change was spoken about. All I can say is that the suggestion that that was one of my motives in considering this matter is absolutely and utterly without foundation. What more can I say on such a point? But this I can say further. If the change had been made it would certainly have been made so as to leave any pending matters the Judge thought desirable to deal with himself in his own hands. I would not dream of making the change in any other fashion, and I am quite sure the learned Judge would have desired that it should be so made. So much for those matters that I was supposed to desire to transfer from one Judge to another. But, my Lords, what is involved in this statement? As grave an imputation, I venture to say, upon the Judges as it is upon myself. I could only desire to transfer cases from one Judge to another as suggested in order to screen somebody, because I thought the Judge to whom I was transferring them would not act in the same capacity and with the same impartiality in bringing wrongdoers to justice as the Judge from whom the cases were transferred. I venture to say that the independence and fearlessness of the Judges is no novelty. It is not a monopoly of this Judge or that Judge. I do not detract, and I am sure the learned Judge to whom I am going to refer—Mr. Justice Vaughan Williams—would not deem that I detract from his high qualities as a Judge when I say that there are other Judges upon the Bench who are as fearless, and as determined to do their duty, and as little influenced by considerations personal, as that learned Judge himself. But, my Lords, if I had sought for a Judge pliant to my will, and willing to screen persons, I should search for him in vain. Then as to the learned Judge to whom reference has been made, there is no one that knows him who does not know that he would be as incapable of doing anything but meting out the most rigorous justice to wrongdoers as any Judge that ever sat on the Bench. My Lords, I say that the article which contains that charge carries its own refutation. It says that it does not attack the competence and integrity of Mr. Justice Romer, as he is admitted to be a Judge of great ability, and of unquestioned impartiality. Then does anybody think that, if I wished to screen any person, I should transfer the business to a Judge of the highest ability, the highest character, and the most unquestionable impartiality? That I should be so foolish and so ignorant of facts that everybody knew with regard to the qualities of this Judge as to transfer cases to him in order to screen some unknown persons, of whom I have no conception, when such persons could not possibly benefit from the change? My Lords, against what I have put before you there is nothing but the assertion of an anonymous writer as to what my motives were. It was felt, I suppose, that further evidence was needed, and in a campaign of scandal there are many ready to forge weapons, and join in the fray. Accordingly, a paragraph taken from the *South Wales Daily Post* went the round of the papers. It is in these terms—

> "The Press Association states that the *South Wales Daily Post* last night states—' Important information has reached us from a perfectly reliable quarter bearing on the question whether the proposed replacing of Mr. Justice Vaughan Williams by Mr. Justice Romer in the Chancery Division of the High Court was connected with the recent action of the former Judge in the matter of the New Zealand Company, of which Mr. Mundella was a director. It is to the effect

that the Lord Chancellor wrote to Mr. Justice Vaughan Williams asking if he would not withdraw some of the observations made by him in the course of the winding-up action; that Mr. Justice Williams replied that he could not withdraw the observations; and that, upon the request being repeated, the Judge intimated to Lord Herschell that if the matter were pressed further, he would consider it his duty to publish the correspondence.' "

Now, my Lords, all that is absolutely and utterly untrue. I never wrote to Mr. Justice Vaughan Williams asking him to withdraw some observations he had made in the New Zealand Company case. I neither wrote nor spoke, directly or indirectly, to Mr. Justice Vaughan Williams asking him to withdraw some of the observations he had made in the New Zealand Company case. It follows, of course, that the learned Judge did not reply; that I did not repeat the request; and that the Judge never intimated to me that, if the matter were pressed, he would consider it his duty to publish correspondence which never existed. But, my Lords, that weapon was cleverly forged. The *South Wales Post* does not have its observations generally accorded such wide circulation as they have had on this occasion. Mr. Justice Vaughan Williams happened to be on the South Wales Circuit, and the fact of a paragraph of this kind appearing in a South Wales Newspaper led many people to jump to the conclusion that there must be something in it, that the newspaper must have got the information from the learned Judge, especially when it said that it had got the information from a perfectly reliable quarter. I do not know what is the reliable quarter; but I know it is a quarter in which lies are forged and that this is one of them. I venture, my Lords, to say that it is intolerable that those who have to discharge public duties should be subjected to such attacks as these. And more than that, that they should be told that unless they rush into print and write to the newspapers and challenge and contradict these attacks that everybody is to believe them and write articles on the assumption that they are founded on fact. We sometimes see attacks upon the foreign Press for their campaigns of scandal. May it not be well to look once in a while at home, and to see whether if there be a mote in their eye there may not be a beam in our own. I have given my word on this matter; I have given cogent evidence in support of my word; but there is something more I am inclined to appeal to. I have now spent 20 years in Parliamentary life—eight of these in office—in that fierce light which is thrown on the action of every man who takes part in Parliamentary life. I ask those who have accused me and those who have been ready to believe the accusation, to what act of mine can they point, or to what word I have uttered that would indicate that I am capable of this contemptible conduct with which I have been charged? My lords, I believe no one could be more alive than I am to the importance of the Judges being independent and being no respecters of persons, for I have myself taken part in the administration of justice. But there is another danger equally to be guarded against, and it is lest one should trim his sails to catch the passing gust of passion or allow one's judgment to be overborne by popular clamour. My Lords, I do not resent criticism. I welcome it. I hope I never shall be proud enough, or obstinate enough, or stupid enough to fail to profit by it. But the imputation of baseless motives and foul motives is not criticism; it is slander. I have spoken warmly. I hope your Lordships will pardon me, for I have felt deeply. From the first moment that I became Lord Chancellor it has been my dearest ambition that no act of mine should lead to the office being held in less esteem, or should diminish its dignity. For that I care more than for life itself. If I cannot be trusted to discharge the duties which the law has cast upon me, even with common honesty, I ought not to hold the Great Seal for another moment. I am conscious—no one more so—that it may, that it will, pass into abler hands than mine. I hope it will not be thought unbecoming of me if I add that it will never be held by any one who will discharge the duties attached to it with a more sincere regard for its great responsibilities.

THE QUEEN'S SPEECH.

ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO HER MAJESTY'S MOST GRACIOUS SPEECH.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR delivered the Report of HER MAJESTY'S GRACIOUS SPEECH from the Throne.

*LORD WELBY rose to move:—"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty in reply to the Speech from the Throne." He said that he knew he might rely on the House's friendly forbearance when he pleaded that his life had been spent in the public service, and in that branch of the public service of which it was the watchword that its members, serving both parties in the State, should hold their tongues. Since Parliament rose a great power for peace had passed away; but the influence of the late Tsar still survived. The empires of Russia and Great Britain were on most friendly terms. The prospects of peace throughout the world among the great Powers were good; and Her Majesty was able to assure Parliament that her relations with all foreign Powers were friendly. He believed that it was the policy of the noble Marquess opposite (the Marquess of Salisbury) to anticipate in friendly negotiations points in relation to Africa which might arise between England, France, and other Powers, and so to obviate difficulties which in times of excitement might lead to great anxiety. It must, therefore, be a subject of congratulation, not only to Her Majesty's Government, but to the noble Marquess also, that Her Majesty's Government had been able to conclude an agreement for marking out the boundaries of Sierra Leone and the adjacent territories of France. Might not this be taken as a sample of that happy continuity of foreign policy which had marked the administrations of the noble Marquess, the present Prime Minister, and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs? He believed that when the papers were laid before their Lordships they would find that security had been taken for the maintenance of a reasonable tariff between the possessions of Her Majesty's Government and France, and also that security had been taken for free intercourse between the subjects of all Powers. From one quarter there came "steaming up a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong," coupled with stories of events which had deeply moved the public mind. But those stories were at present unconfirmed, and he thought it would be agreed that in equity we must wait to hear more about them. At all events, the Porte had promised and instituted an inquiry, and Her Majesty's Government, under the powers conferred upon them by the Treaty of Berlin, in concert with other Powers, had appointed delegates to watch the progress of the inquiry. By that means he thought the country might rest assured that due precautions had been taken for eliciting the truth, and that when the truth had been elicited justice would be done. It must be gratifying to all that Her Majesty was able to announce a decrease of crime in Ireland. It was a striking fact that the outrages reported in 1894 were fewer than in any year since Her Majesty ascended the Throne; and that with respect to agrarian outrages alone, they were lower than in any year for the last 18 years. Might he not express the hope that this was in some degree owing to the legislation of past years in which both Parties in the State had shared; and, speaking from the Government side of the House, might he not also attribute it in some degree to the fact that a large section of Great Britain desired legislation in accordance with Irish ideas? Their Lordships were aware that in 1896 15 years would have elapsed since the passing of the Act of 1881; and it would be necessary to make provision for the proceedings after the expiry of that statutory period in cases as they arose. Her Majesty's Government would ask Parliament at the same time to remedy certain defects which were deemed to have occurred in the working of the Land Act. It had been found that there was a certain want of uniformity in the decision of the Courts. Also, that there was a question whether the tenants always got full allowance for the improvements which they had created. There was further question whether, under Town Parks, land really used for agricultural purposes was not included; and there was a defect in the definitions of the Act of 1881 which, at all events, ought to be remedied. He was aware that there was a considerable difference of opinion upon this subject; and that a large body of opinion in Ireland was opposed to the proposed legislation. At the same time, there were, among the high authorities in Ireland, men quite as opposed to the general policy of the present Government as any noble Lord opposite, who thought that these questions ought to be settled, and that it was desirable to settle them without delay. Might it not be possible, if that were the case, that some arrangement should be found by which a measure should be passed into law settling these questions, and not leaving them to clog for an indefinite time the legislation of future Sessions? It was proposed, also, to reintroduce a Bill which did not pass into law the last Session—a Bill for the reinstating of the evicted tenants. He thought that on this point there was not a real difference of principle between the two sides of the House; because, if he remembered aright, the principle enunciated in the Evicted Tenants Bill was also enunciated in Mr. Balfour's Act of 1891. At all events, last year, the attitude of the two Parties made many people think that an agreement between them was not impossible. Might it not be hoped that a happier issue would attend the bringing in of the Bill this year than it was possible to achieve last year? Her Majesty further recommended a measure for the amalgamation of the City and County of London on the basis of the Report of the Royal Commission, presided over by Mr. Courtney. The Act of 1888 in reality conferred a new charter, though, perhaps, an imperfect one, on London; and there was no greater proof of the value of that charter than the amount of Municipal feeling which it had elicited. If he were asked to adduce a further proof of that feeling, he should only refer to the lists published day by day, of the candidates for the coming County Council election. But the Act of 1888 was, to a certain extent, imperfect. It created a central body outside the City, but it did not create local bodies. The consequence was that, without any fault of the London County Council, the weight of all the details of administration devolved on the Council; and, moreover, in consequence of the absence of those local bodies, Parliament had been obliged in the interval to impose still further duties upon the Council. All parties were agreed that these district bodies should be created, and that the work of development should begin; but he was afraid that here the agreement ceased. The scheme of the Royal Commission on the basis of which Her Majesty's Government proposed to act, contemplated a full development of the principle of Local Government. It proposed to create district bodies directly elected, to transfer to and to invest in them all powers not necessarily reserved to the Central Authority. The Central Authority would inherit the privileges and the associations of the City, but would enjoy a greater authority, inasmuch as it would represent London in its entirety. On the other side, an alternative scheme and been sketched out by an authority well entitled to speak on London government. Under that scheme the City of London would be unreformed. It would continue, though only a fragment of London, to represent London as a whole; but the real London would have no part in the body which so represented it. The City would be surrounded by a number of small municipalities independent of each other, with no inducement to common action and no controlling power able to enforce common action; for the scheme of the noble Lord spoke of the central body as the servant of the municipalities, and it was difficult to see how the servant could possess a controlling power. Had not this scheme, however, somewhat of a punitive appearance? It was an old custom in the case of objectionable persons to hang, draw, and quarter them as a warning to other objectionable persons. Was the Capital of the Empire to be quartered and its sections put up in districts of the Metropolis not as a type but as a warning to other municipalities? He was afraid that this belittling of London was due to a distrust of the County Council not altogether justified. During the short time he had been connected with the County Council he had been struck by the amount and goodness of the work undertaken as well as by the excellent manner in which it had been done. It was said that the County Council under the impulse of extreme men entered upon rash and dangerous experiments and wasted the ratepayers' money. Take the wages question as an example. As far as he could see the County Council did not differ in principle from Parliament itself. He had looked at the programmes of the Progressive and Moderate Parties, and he scarcely saw any difference between them. Undoubtedly the County Council had undertaken and executed a number of works as an experiment; and this was represented as a very dangerous experiment. But in this policy was the County Council doing more than following the example of many bodies throughout the country, including that very revolutionary body the London and North-Western Railway Company? He admitted that it was an experiment, but it was an experiment conducted under such keen criticism and watched by such experts that its weak points would be found out and would be duly reported to the country. The increase in the rate was admitted, but he asked whether it was more, at all events on one point, than the natural consequences of the extended demands of the public necessitated? If their Lordships were to judge by the rate alone, what would be the verdict passed on the Imperial Parliament judged by the increase in the national rate in the last few years? It might, again, be urged that in carrying out this experimental policy the County Council entertained schemes emanating from the Labour Party. Did it stand alone in this? Had Parliament never made a leap in the dark? Were there no projects of experimental finance afloat and spoken of as not unacceptable to high authority; and were there not signs that retreat to Toynbee Hall was becoming an exercise of religion in Conservative politics? With reference to the passage of Her Majesty's speech referring to the depression in the agricultural interest, their Lordships were aware that a Royal Commission was now sitting to examine the question; but the example of other similar inquiries which marked their history like milestones since the Peace did not give lively promise of any immediate or heroic remedy. He passed by empirical measures intended to raise prices as not coming within the domain of practical politics. The complaint was that the value of agricultural produce was so low that it did not pay the producers. Produce is so abundant in our ports that supply well-nigh outstrips demand. He said that an eminent American economist not long ago observed that the American farmer sold his wheat in the early seventies in Europe at 54s. a quarter; in 1890 the price was 32s. a quarter, but he still sold at a profit, thanks to labour-saving appliances and to the reduction in the rate of transport. But the downward stream did not stop there, and the American farmer complained as loudly as the English farmer that when wheat was 20s. or less per quarter he could not grow his wheat at a profit. The reason for those low prices was due to new railroads being constructed every year and to new fields of supply being opened up, as well as to swifter ships and keener competition, and the shipowner complained as loudly as the farmer that he could not get a profit. Wheat was now carried from New York to Liverpool for 5s. a ton, and wheat, which in 1873 was carried from California to Europe for 70s. to 75s. a ton, was carried in December last at 28s. 6d. a ton. But it was not private competition alone that was at work. Governments throughout the world co-operated with the farmer in reducing cost of transport, and in making the world into one big market, and they must not be surprised at the natural consequence—low prices. Any idea, therefore, of a speedy or perhaps eventual rise in prices must be rejected by those suffering from agricultural depression. Government is powerless to raise prices, even if it wished to do so. But ought they to wish for a rise in prices? Surely the object of Government was the greatest good of the greatest number, and was there a greater good for the mass of the people than cheap food. Would any one dare to assert the converse and say that cheap food was an evil. But were their Lordships satisfied that our farmers made full use of their markets? He spoke with diffidence, but might perhaps offer an illustration of his meaning. In 1861 Denmark sent butter to this country worth £105,000; in 1894 it sent butter worth £5,850,000. He understood that in this interval the Danish farmers had taken largely to co-operative farming, and that their butter practically commanded the market as compared with our own. Was it not possible for something to be done to regain that butter trade for English farmers? The past year had been a bad one owing to slack trade and agricultural depression, but he thought they might say that the mass of the working population had done fairly well. Pauperism had not increased. As far as he could learn, the numbers of the unemployed had not grown, and wages had been very fairly maintained. In certain fluctuating trades they had no doubt gone down, but the Customs and Inland Revenue returns showed that the working classes had been able to avail themselves of the cheap prices of articles of consumption. The Revenue was keeping fairly well up; the Customs Revenue was good; and the item of stamps, which marked commercial transactions, was also doing well. As far as he could learn, the Beer Duty was increasing, though, on the other hand, the Spirit Duties were not quite so good. He did not know the reason for the falling off. Perhaps it was due in part to the uncertainty as to spirit legislation in the future. The Income Tax had been of late more or less stationary. Had noble Lords thought of the ever-progressing expenditure on armaments and the sources out of which that expenditure would be met? Parliament would not give any Chancellor of the Exchequer the confidence which George I. placed in his Chancellor, when he said that Walpole could turn stones into gold. Perhaps when Statesmen were embarassed in devising new taxes, recourse would be had to an old implement of finance which Parliament had relegated to the museum of Treasury antiquities—he meant economy. He begged to move—

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, as followeth:—

Most Gracious Sovereign,

We, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled, beg leave to thank Your Majesty for the Most Gracious Speech which Your Majesty has addressed to both Houses of Parliament."

*LORD BATTERSEA, in seconding the address, said, that he was sure that whatever opinion they might have of the merits or demerits of the Bills shadowed out in the Gracious Speech from the Throne, they would agree that the Government deserved to be congratulated on seizing the first opportunity of placing measures of great importance before Parliament—measures to which they had pledged themselves at and before the last General Election—measures which, if they came into law, would do much to improve the social, political, and religious condition of all classes in the country. At the commencement of his political career he sat for a Welsh constituency, and he seized that opportunity to thank the Government, in the name of his old constituents, and in the name of the bulk of the Welsh people, for the promise of a Bill dealing with the Establishment of the English Church in Wales. He was aware that the question bristled with difficulties, that it would be hotly contested on both sides, that it was one which deserved their most serious consideration, and it ought to be justly dealt with. He gave full credit to those who differed from him for the noblest motives and the highest resolves, but he claimed for himself and those who agreed with him the same tolerance and the same mutual spirit of fairplay. It had been admitted by the noble Marquess and by the noble Duke over and over again that under our Representative system if on any given question the opinion of the people was clearly defined and made out, that opinion should prevail. There could be no shadow of doubt as to the opinion of the Welsh people on this subject. It was clearly defined and made out. In 1880, after the last Reform Bill, there were four Members returned for Wales who have opposed this Bill. It was a test measure then as it was now. That minority had been raised as high as five, but at the present moment it was only three. Of these three two were returned by majorities under 100, and it was only in the other instance that the majority was considerable. On the other hand, those who had been returned to support this Bill were returned in every case by a majority of over 2,000. He claimed for the Welsh people that they were not surpassed by any other as courageous, loyal, a law-abiding and Bible-loving community. The fact was, whether they liked it or not, the Welsh people were a people of the Nonconformist faith, and this was with them the outward and visible sign of an inward and a spiritual conviction. There was not the slightest intention on the part of the Government or of the Welsh people, or of those who supported the Bill, to in any way injure or "desecrate" the fabric of the Church. They did not want to belittle its Ministers, or those who, like themselves, worshipped within the walls of the Church, still less to diminish its spiritual authority. They wished to remove certain evils which hampered its progress, and at the same time to remove a national grievance, and so open up new paths for religious advance. It was in that spirit that the Bill was proposed by the Government, with the desire to set up and strengthen in the Principality a united religion worthy of the people's love and respect, which would not require the support of a privileged minority against the wills and inclinations of a vastly preponderating majority of the people. He passed to another subject. They were constantly being twitted with proposing great constitutional changes to the neglect of social reforms. When he read in the Gracious Speech from the Throne the reference to the great question of the liquor traffic, he thought the argument could no longer be fairly used. If there was one subject which was more than another a social question it was the liquor traffic, which lay at the root of all their social grievances and problems. He trusted when that Bill came before them it would not be treated from a Party, but from a national, point of view. He knew something of the Prime Minister, and a good deal of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and they were not, in his opinion, fanatics, idealists, or "dreamers of dreams." Certainly he (the noble Lord) was not one of their "young men who saw visions," nor did he believe that any legislation would, with one sweep, do away with vice, misery, poverty, hunger, dirt, or crime; but legislation should do something, and he believed the Government would make a great attempt to master the difficulties of this question. He thought the change in the Bill of last year giving the power to localities to diminish the number of public-house licences was a distinct improvement. They were proposing to give to localities the same right which every one of their Lordships exercised on their estates—the right to say how many public-houses they should have in the district in which the people lived. He did not know what the opinions of the House might be, but he was certain that out of doors there was a very strong feeling that some drastic method should be adopted in dealing with the drink traffic, which was allowed on all sides to be a national danger and a national disgrace. He was aware that the vested interests they would have to consider in this case were of great importance, but, after all, it was not the vested interests of a particular class they had to consider, but the interests of the people at large. When they were told by the Judges and Magistrates of the country, by the police authorities, by those who watched over the lunatic asylums, the gaols, and the workhouses, that drink was the cause of a large proportion of the crime in the country, he thought it became the duty of Her Majesty's Government to see whether something could not be done to remove the temptations, at all events to some extent, which led to those evils. He supported this measure because he believed it would be a just measure, he believed it was brought forward in a good cause, and for a noble end. With respect to the other questions mentioned in the Speech, he would refer only to the Bills relating to the question of One man One Vote and to that of Registration. These subjects, however, had been so much discussed inside and outside Parliament that it was unnecessary to say much about them, but it was essential, in his opinion, to satisfy the more democratic age in which they now lived, that plural voting should be abolished, and that, as to Registration, the burden which was now borne by individuals ought to be borne by the rates. With those few observations he begged to second the Address.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: My Lords, it is a time-honoured custom in this House that we should compliment the Mover and Seconder of the Address on the speeches they have made, and that custom would seem to argue an assumption, on the part of the speaker who utters the praise, that it was founded on the idea that, generally speaking, the Mover and Seconder of the Address are young and bashful members of the House. I do not know whether that is absolutely the case in the present instance. But the noble Lord who has just sat down relieves me of any difficulty on that point, for he has assured us that he is not one of the Prime Minister's young men. I am glad to hear it, but notwithstanding that it may seem somewhat of an assumption in me to compliment a noble Lord, whose words I have listened to with deep submission when we both occupied seats together in the Treasury, still, I can say, with the most perfect confidence, that I have seldom heard a more energetic and vigorous defence of the special subjects of the Gracious Speech which were to the taste of each noble Lord, or speeches so vigorous, so exhaustive, that I should think they would spare them the necessity of making second speeches when the particular measures are brought before the House. My Lords, the Speech itself, to which I think comparatively little attention was paid by the Mover and Seconder, deals with many interesting subjects, but it cannot be said to be extravagantly lengthy. I can only express my satisfaction that the lengthy and troublesome negotiations with respect to Sierra Leone have been brought to a conclusion. Whether it be a satisfactory conclusion it is impossible for me to judge until we have seen the Treaty, but I think there can be very little doubt that Her Majesty's Government have exercised a wise discretion in doing their utmost to come to an arrangement; because, as long as an arrangement was not in existence, it was almost impossible to prevent the collisions which we have so much lamented in these parts. With respect to the atrocities that have been committed in Armenia, I should be sorry to make any definite assertion now, and for this simple reason—that the paragraph in the Speech informs us that the subject-matter to which it alludes is *sub judice* at the present moment, and it would be clearly improper—nay, almost indecent—to express any opinion on the matters on which the Commissioner is to examine and report. I am a little puzzled, however, at the language of the paragraph. Why the inhabitants of Armenia are called "Armenians in a district of Asia Minor" I am unable to imagine. My impression is, that they are not in Asia Minor at all, according to any definition that existed of Asia Minor in former times; and certainly I should have thought it would have been simpler to call these people inhabitants of Armenia. I should also observe, that I doubt very much whether the inquiry will be sufficiently exhaustive if it only deals with the supposed offences of the officers and soldiers of the Sultan. If statements which we have seen are correct, there have been outrages committed by many persons who are not officers or soldiers of the Sultan, and it is, at all events, asserted—I do not for a moment say it is true—that these outrages are not confined to one or the other of the two religious communities among whom they have happened. Whether that is true or not I do not know. I have nothing to say in challenge of the action which Her Majesty's Government have taken, but with respect to the future I will, in as cautious words as I can use, venture humbly to submit one recommendation to them. It is to remember that they are dealing with the most thorny of all problems, with the most irritable of all subjects—a community divided to its base by difference of race and of religion; and if they give to either side of that community an impression that their particular claims are to receive support from outside, they must remember that they will incur an immense responsibility if they hold out any hopes which they have not made up their minds to fulfil. There are many policies which may be pursued in respect to these unhappy cases, but the worst policy of all is to give any section of those Eastern populations the impression that a great support is to be given to their particular prejudices and aspirations and then to leave them when the crisis comes with a few consolatory phrases to meet as best they can the excited irritation of their opponents. My Lords, I have necessarily used very vague language, because I am impressed in all these matters with the considerable danger that may arise, when we are dealing with the principal Powers of the world, from language that is used either in this or the other House of Parliament. The electric telegraphs and the railways have largely diminished our freedom of debate. Our grandfathers were able to discuss with absolute freedom and unfettered language the action of their Governments and the action of Foreign Powers, and they had little cause to fear that any language they might use, however much it might be misunderstood, would injure the public interest or produce results that might be deplored, because then many days, or even weeks, must have elapsed before the report of it could reach those whom it might have been supposed to interest. If we have abstained, as I think we have carefully abstained, from commenting on matters connected with the Foreign Office in which we may take a deep interest—I do not mean commenting in an adverse sense, but merely commenting—I claim that we are justified in doing so by the peculiar position in which we stand, and by the danger which such discussions might carry with them. At the same time, I beg to disavow any supposition that therefore we necessarily assent—the supposition has been made before and it may be made again—to the matters which we have abstained from criticising. We might criticise them if we had a committee on foreign relations as they have in the United States—we might have criticised them if we lived in another age when communication was less rapid, but unless there is an imperious demand of public policy we hold that in dealing with the Great Powers of the world it is a better policy to abstain from that criticism, even when we do not entirely agree, believing, as we do, that Her Majesty's Government have, as much as we ourselves have, an earnest desire to advance the power and the interests of this country. I do not think it is an expedient thing, though we might have been encouraged to it by a recent example, that Members even of the Opposition should use language in a deliberative assembly expressing jealousy and hatred of the subjects of an allied Power. Let others do these things if they will; we will not follow such an example. The Speech goes on to observe that all offences against the law in Ireland have sunk to the lowest level upon record, and this is intimated as due to the administration of Mr. Morley. I could understand this if it had been agricultural offences, though I should then have differed from the inference; but that all offences of all kinds should yield under the sunshine of his presence seems to me to be claiming more for his proximity than any reasonable probability justifies. I would only say that such a contention is capable of two interpretations. I saw recently that a distinguished Irish leader in addressing the Ulster farmers warned them that they, the people in the south of Ireland, unless they were ousted from the north of Ireland, did not intend to go on committing outrages for the purpose of lowering their rents. No doubt that gentleman spoke with a full acquaintance with the machinery that had been at work during the last 15 years. If that machinery is quiescent now, and if no offences are thrust on the attention of the Irish Secretary, it is just possible that it is because those who direct such operations are his well-wishers, and have a notion that as long as he retains office they have a chance of getting as much as they can desire without the use of the dangerous methods which they resort to under other Governments. It is part of that general appeal for the help of the criminal classes in Ireland which has been made more than once by this Government during our experience of it. With regard to other matters in the Speech, I will not go into them in any detail. I have seen them before, and, if I live, I shall probably see them again. I would only regret the peculiar view of Her Majesty's Government in relation to the relief of Agriculture. There is one thing that might be done to some extent for Agriculture, and that is, to relieve the burden of the rates, which presses so heavily upon it. So Her Majesty's Government, being confronted with a state of Agriculture more appalling than we have ever seen before, propose to place upon it a new burden in order to pay the expenses of Members of Parliament, and also to place upon it the burden of certain Light Railways, which are supposed to be a panacea for all its ills. Now, agriculturists cannot find money for the most necessary operations of Agriculture. They cannot find money to clean the land or to manure the land; and to tell them that if they are in distress their way is to levy a rate to make a Light Railway, seems to me nothing better than illusory. It reminds me almost of the princess who, when she heard the people wanted bread, wondered why they did not eat buns. This is a very interesting Speech, but it is more interesting by what it omits than by what it inserts. I am very much struck by the conciseness of the appeal to the House of Commons—

"Gentlemen of the House of Commons,—The

Estimates for the year will be laid before you without delay."

Almost every Speech I can remember promised the House of Commons that both efficiency and economy—as to which the noble Lord opposite addressed a timely appeal—should be observed in the Estimates that were forthcoming. But there is not a word of that in this Speech. I can only construe that curious omission by supposing that the party for economy and the party for efficiency were equally balanced in the Cabinet; and that, after lengthened conflict, they determined to say nothing about it. Of course, if there is to be anything done for the Navy, if there is to be a large loan raised, it is a very odd thing that no hint of the necessity of such a strengthening of the Navy was laid before the House of Commons in this Speech. In fact, I regard that blank as an eloquent proof of the vigour and the success of the noble Lord whom I am glad to see opposite, the First Lord of the Admiralty. There is a very much more remarkable omission in the Speech. We have led an agitated autumn. We have heard that a revolution of the most portentous kind was intended. It was not from our side that such a description of the revolution intended came. Ministers generally represent the measures which they are bringing in, especially if they are of a destructive kind, as something much milder than the Opposition suppose; but [the noble Lord the Prime Minister took great pains that we should not underrate the magnitude of the revolution he was introducing. He told us it was the supreme question of the time. He told us it was "terrible," and that if he could imagine any greater word than "terrible" he would use it in respect of that issue. He told us that nothing greater had been before the country since they had rebelled against Charles I. and James II. Where is it? I understand from rumours that go about that it is a kind of birch-rod which the noble Earl hangs against the wall, and which he will take down when he sees a favourable opportunity of employing it. But surely that is a novel, and not a very admirable, way of dealing with revolutions in this country. I think if you have got a revolution on your programme it ought to come first in the list. People have initiated wars who have said they did it with a light heart, but I never knew a person initiate a revolution who thought so little of it that he did not think it worth while to mention it to Parliament. Well, the strange lightness of estimate which this mode of proceeding betrays extends through the general policy observed by the Government in this juncture. I will use the Saxon rather than the Latin word—there is a doubleness in all they do which implies either that there are two Leaders or that the single Leader, if there is one, is a man of singularly changeable mind. We have all of us studied the accounts which in successive speeches the noble Lord has given us of his Resolution, and nobody has been able to make out the precise nature of the action which he contemplated. At first he denounced in very vigorous terms the composition of this House, and dwelt with piteous lamentations on the fact that he had only 30 peers—or 29 I believe it is now—behind him. Of course, after that observation I suppose he thought it inconsistent with his principles to add any more to the Liberal Peers of the House, and that we have seen the last of that interesting creation. The noble Lord who spoke first to-night has many claims upon our respect and admiration, but he has a special claim upon our interest, that he is like the dodo—the last of the creation to which he belongs, and the political geologist of the future will reconstruct his remains with infinite interest. But the Prime Minister began with lamenting the possession of only 30 Peers, and made all kinds of references to the noble Lords on this side which I characterised at the time and which I will not repeat. But we concluded, of course, that he meant to reform the House. Oh no! that was the last of his intentions. When he was a private Member he made some propositions for the reform of the House; and, as they were not received with enthusiasm, he held that any proposition to reform the House on the part of the Government was a matter from which he was entirely precluded. I will observe that when it is said, as I see it is sometimes, that the House of Lords dislikes, like a certain Scriptural character, to be reformed, the House of Lords is very hardly treated by that observation. A reform of the House of Lords has never once been proposed in a Bill by a Liberal Government. It was once proposed by a Conservative Government, and whether the proposal was good or bad, the House of Lords accepted it. During the last 50 years Liberal Governments have been in power for 33 years, and they have never once proposed a reform of the House of Lords; so I hardly think it lies in their mouths to reproach the House of Lords because no reform has been adopted. But the remarkable feature of all this campaign has been the doubleness of the advocacy that has been employed. All the argument has turned upon the composition of the House. All the intentions of the Government, so far as we can divine them, imply that the Government wish, if they have the power, to diminish the authority of this House in respect to the House of Commons. Now these two propositions stand upon a very different footing. As I have said, reforms have always been very freely discussed in this House, and I do not think the divisions of opinion upon them have borne a party character. There are a great many gentlemen on this side who have views of one sort or another upon the subject; but, of course, this is a matter that can only be accepted from the Government of the day. But, though I may keep an open mind, as I have in the past, on the subject of modifying the constitution of this House, when we go to the question of limiting its powers my impression is, that a very different state of feeling will be found to exist in the House. I have met many Peers who were in favour of modifying the constitution of this House; I have never met one—I mean, of course, on the Conservative side—[*a Ministerial laugh*] who would support the limitation of its powers in respect to the House of Commons. Yes, the noble Lord laughs at that, but he tells us he will not reform the House of Lords; he will not destroy the Veto of the House of Lords because he cannot overbear the Conservative majority. Well, I tell him that the alternative to which it appears he intends to have resort—that of diminishing the powers of the House of Lords in respect to the House of Commons—will meet with a far more determined resistance from that which he well knows is a majority in the House; and that it is, from the point of view of practicability, a far more hopeless scheme than any other that has been mentioned. I can understand the people who wish to reform the House—I can understand—though I am very, very deeply against them—the people who wish to sweep away the House; but the proposal to keep the House as a sham and to destroy it as a reality, to erect a protection which is no protection, but will mislead and destroy all who trust to it—that is a proposal which would at once be ridiculous and contemptible for your Lordships to accept, and would be the most pernicious course which it was possible for any Government to pursue. But, my Lords, that is not the only strange inconsistency and uncertainty and, if I may say so, the levity of the mode in which the Government have treated the present crisis of affairs. They say they cannot get the measures they desire passed. Well, they know perfectly well why that is. They know the House of Lords represents an overwhelming majority of England in its objections to these measures, and it is only by a very scanty majority, swept us from various other places — especially from the south and west of Ireland—that the noble Lord is able to carry his measures through the House of Commons. I do not think that a greater amount of agreement between the two Houses is probable so long as that state of things exists. The noble Lord admits that we must appeal to the people; yet, instead of appealing to the people on a clear issue, distinctly drawn, instead of appealing when the Home Rule Bill was thrown out, when the nature of the appeal would have been unmistakable and clear, he is now merely engaged in multiplying the matters which will be brought before the people for their consent, and so confusing the decision which will be given. How can a man give you a clear answer if he has only one answer to give and you ask him ten questions at the same moment? Yet, that is the problem which, by the course they are now pursuing, the Government propose to submit to the constituencies of this country. My Lords, the truth is, that the Government have ceased to look upon legislative measures as things intended to modify the existing legal state of things in this country. They are not intended to pass. They are intended merely as missiles to be directed against the House of Lords; and the result of such a policy must be to injure the chance of their being properly considered in the other House or in this. In the other House everything will be dealt with, with the knowledge that it is not likely to be passed into law. In this House, naturally, the fact that the measures are directed against this House, and are not merely confined to the matters with which they affect to deal, will injure the measures in the consideration of your Lordships. A snowball is a very beautiful thing if you examine it merely with reference to its constitution; but if it is directed against you by an unduly aggressive companion you forget the character of its constitution and you think only of it as a missile. I am afraid that this succession of snowballs, which Her Majesty's Government are directing against the House of Lords, will injure the true and just consideration of the measures which they intend to submit to us. My Lords, I regret deeply, in the public interest, that Her Majesty's Government have not thought fit to follow the precedent of Lord Palmerston. He, like they, had a very decided state of opinion to deal with and a very small majority in the House of Commons. But he did not take the opportunity of introducing a crowd of revolutionary measures. He devoted himself rather to that class of measures which did not appeal to the antagonism of class or creed, and was, therefore, able to fulfil, with credit and with great utility to his country, the term of the Office that he held. Her Majesty's Government have taken exactly the opposite course, and because their majority is trivial, because it is uncertain, because it appears to be going away every day, therefore they have addressed themselves to all the questions that divide our community the most and that can excite the greatest antipathy between classes. I regret that in the interest of the public welfare: I do not regret it as a Party man. I can remember that Lord Melbourne clung to Office with a trivial majority, and declined to appeal to the people when an appeal to the people had obviously become necessary, and the result was that Sir Robert Peel came back with a majority of 90. I can remember Mr. Gladstone unwisely refusing to dissolve immediately after the loss of the University Bill. He clung on for a year; the people became more and more against him, and Mr. Disraeli came in with a considerable majority. And if I could wish for any object-lesson to the people of the danger that a system of Single Chambers would bring upon them, I could wish for nothing better than that course which the noble Lord is trying to prescribe to the House of Commons. A House of Commons divided into sections, maintaining a majority by mere log-rolling, in which a variety of interests has perpetually to be consulted in order to maintain the scanty preponderance—a House of Commons which, while it professes to appeal to the people, in reality defies the people and insists upon continuing its course, though the moment has come when the decision of the people upon the controversies that exist ought obviously to be taken, though the relations of the two Houses in consequence of the state of things has reached a condition which is unfavourable to sound legislation, the spectacle of such a use of his majority as the noble Lord is making is the best warning of any that I could desire of the dangers that would happen to public liberties and the public safety if, in name or in effect, a single Chamber had uncontrolled power in this country. My Lords, I regret for other reasons that the time of Parliament is spent on these matters. I regret that these violently antagonistic Measures which can come to nothing should be all that the energy of Parliament can do. It seems as though we thought there were no dangers and troubles outside that required our attention, as though we were blind and deaf to the misery through which large portions of our countrymen are passing. What is the cause of this great depression? We cannot tell. Is it the difficulties of the currency? Is it the difficulties of fiscal legislation? Does it come from want of confidence? Has the peculiar legislation which is being perpetually threatened by the supporters of the Government anything to do with the unwillingness of capital to venture forth and risk itself? All these are doubtful and difficult questions; they require our deepest attention; all the intellect and wisdom Parliament could give ought to be directed to attempting to mitigate the sufferings under which our fellow-countrymen are labouring, and I cannot believe you will increase their love for Parliamentary Institutions if they see that now, as for so many years in the past, you are simply engaged in the sterile contest between class and class and creed and creed and one House against the other, and you are forgetting those vital interests of the poorest and the most undefended, which it is your first and noblest office in this building to fulfil.

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: My Lords, I am sure that with the general tone of the noble Marquess's remarks, when we make deductions for that agreeable flow of irony and sarcasm to which we are accustomed, we have, on the whole, no particular reason to complain. Not even the somewhat sub-acid compliments that he addressed to my noble Friend the Mover and my noble Friend the Seconder were entirely free from that taint. He compared my noble Friend to the dodo, and expressed the hope that at no remote period he might have the opportunity of examining his remains. I am not so sanguine. I listened with delight to his speech, and I am glad to find that, though in the Civil Service he says his tongue was tied, we may hope that he will find ample and fruitful use for it in the Debates of this House. And as for my noble Friend the Seconder, who has had what is called a much larger sphere of usefulness for his eloquence, I am quite sure that we see in him one who on one or two of the great questions mentioned in the Queen's Speech will be prepared to take an eloquent and an efficient part. My Lords, I cannot help remembering that the Seconder of the Queen's Speech last year, Lord Swansea, was looking forward with an almost enthusiastical keenness to the opportunity of discussing the disestablishment of the Welsh Church in this House. I deeply deplore his loss, but I feel that in Lord Battersea we have one who will approach that subject with almost equal knowledge and with equal zeal whenever that Bill shall come before your Lordships. My Lords, with the tenour of the noble Marquess's remarks about foreign politics, I need not say that I am in cordial accord. I think he will do me the justice to say that when I was in Opposition I practised a not less reticence and caution than himself, and if he feels caution and reticence in dealing with the question of Armenia, how much more must that responsibility lay on me who speak in the name of the Government of this country? What I will say is this—that we have been able to act in this matter with the cordial acquiescence of the Great Powers most immediately interested; that Russia, France, and Italy—those powers, as they may be described, most interested in this question—have acted, in my opinion, with a single-minded anxiety that the full force of European public opinion should be brought to bear to elicit the truth of these melancholy rumours; and though the Porte has declined the concurrence of Italy as not possessing a Consul at Erzeroum, I am of opinion that the three Powers which are so represented will be able to watch the Commission of Inquiry with such vigilance and such power, that that Commission must, in effect, ascertain the truth. What we have all felt in hearing of these rumours is this—that if they are true our warmest sympathy must go out to our fellow Christians in Asia Minor under the unspeakable sufferings to which they are alleged to have been exposed. In the second place, if those rumours were true—and I wish I could say any official information at my disposal enabled me to give them an authoritative contradiction—it is not possible that the condition of those Christians shall remain in its present state, for otherwise they would be subject to reprisals which would make their last state worse than their first. My Lords, when I pass from foreign politics I find myself in less harmony with the noble Marquess. He was good enough to touch on Ireland—what, in a subsequent part of his speech, he called one of the various other places who contributed to the formation of the majority of Her Majesty's Government. Whether that is Unionist language in speaking of the United Kingdom I do not know. Whether it is to be the message of peace that the noble Marquess is prepared to bring to Scotland, Wales, and Ireland if he should again be entrusted with power I do not know; but, at any rate, it struck me as hardly a happy term to use. But what was still more extraordinary was this, that in specifying what he described as the too meagre language of the Queen's Speech he was pleased to import into the Speech language which did not exist there, and on which he founded an edifying homily. He says that Her Majesty is made to declare in the gracious Speech that the reduction of crime in Ireland is due to the benevolent administration and proximity of Mr. Morley. He must either have invented those words or have been supplied with a garbled copy of the Speech, for I can find none of them in the authorised edition. The noble Marquess was good enough to say that he did not believe it was due to the administration of Mr. Morley, but rather to the sympathy of those criminal classes to which Her Majesty's Government had so often appealed for support. He did not instance the occasions on which we had so appealed for support. It would, I confess, have been more satisfactory to us; but, if he likes, I will give him the reasons which do make me think that cause and effect are to some extent to be found in the reduction of all crime in Ireland and the existence of Her Majesty's present Administration. In the first place, by the admission even of our political foes, the administration of Mr. John Morley has been wise and kindly and firm, and if we had thought it meet, as the noble Marquess seems to have thought it meet, to introduce in the Speech a statement to that effect, we should not have hesitated, so far as the interests of accuracy are concerned, to do so. In the next place, I believe that the reduction of crime is due to another cause, which is the knowledge that the policy of an Irish Legislature for distinctively Irish concerns, satisfying the just aspirations of the Irish people and consistent with Imperial unity, remains in the forefront of the Liberal programme; and I do believe that what elements of disturbance there may be in Ireland are not encouraged to rise against a Government which holds out, when the time should be propitious, so great a promise to that people. The noble Marquess then turned to the subject of Agriculture, and he was extremely facetious on that subject. I regret I cannot altogether imitate his playful wit on a subject which is so distressing, because I honestly consider that there is scarcely a subject before your Lordships, or before the country at this moment, so imminent, so pressing, and so grave, as the state of Agriculture in this country. If I thought that it depended on certain easily removable causes, or certain promptly removable causes; if I thought it represented a state of things singular and unique confined to this island alone; I should be inclined to agree with the noble Marquess, and put it in the very forefront of the subjects with which legislation should deal. But it is not confined to this island. It is so little confined to this island that it is universal, and in place of asking noble Lords opposite to state a country where Agriculture is better than it is in Great Britain, I would rather ask them to state a single spot in the whole civilized world where Agriculture is in a flourishing state at this moment. I would go even further and ask them to name a country where, melancholy as the depression in Agriculture is in this country, Agriculture flourishes more than it does here. But when you have stated the evil you have not necessarily found a remedy. My noble Friend who moved the Address pointed out that artificial means for raising the price of agricultural commodities was out of the question. The noble Marquess, indeed, urged that there should be further subvention towards the local rates. Well, it is true that in some cases subventions towards the local rates have tended to lower the rates, but in most cases I believe they have not had that effect; they have tended to larger local expenditure—in many cases where those subventions have been given the last state of the locality has been worse than the first. The noble Marquess makes light of Light Railways. Well, I do not say Light Railways are an unfailing specific, but I will say this that, after a very careful conference which was held under the auspices of my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade, it was felt that Light Railways did offer a prospect of relief for Agriculture, not merely in England, but in Scotland, and that on that ground alone we might make an immediate step in that direction, which, even if it were not largely operative, could not fail, to some extent, to be beneficial. But I must go a little further than that. We appointed a Royal Commission the year before last to inquire into the state of Agriculture. It was not appointed before it was time, but I may mention it was appointed in our first year of existence, and I do not think that in the six years in which the noble Marquess presided over the councils of the country any such measure was deemed to be necessary. Was Agriculture so flourishing then? [The MARQUESS of SALISBURY: Better.] Better; I do not deny it was better, but I think the noble Marquess will hardly say it was flourishing. But that is beside the point. The Commission is sitting, and it is extremely difficult while it is sitting, when we had some hopes of a prompt Report from that Commission, to come down before the Report and override it and present our own remedies to Parliament. I say we had hopes of a prompt Report. Those hopes have been overclouded through the action of one of the noble Marquess's late colleagues. The Report which was about to be presented has been considerably postponed. I do not know his motives, I am sure they were high-minded; but as the motives of Party politicians on both sides of the House are always open to question and to suspicion. I could wish that in the exercise of his high discretion he had thought it well to hasten and not to retard the Report of that Commission. I will say this further, that when that Report is presented, neither I nor the Government will restrict ourselves to the Light Railways that are mentioned in the Queen's Speech for the relief of Agriculture. We will not be fettered by the measure so announced, but reserve full freedom of action to adopt and to recommend to Parliament any such recommendations of that Report as we shall deem to be expedient. I now come to the last topic which was dealt with by the noble Marquess, and it was by far the most interesting. The noble Marquess rated us severely for the omission of one prominent topic from the Queen's Speech; I mean that which might have laid down the policy of Her Majesty's Government with regard to your Lordships' House. My Lords, I am, I confess, at a loss to know on what precedent the noble Marquess based himself in anticipating a paragraph in the Queen's Speech would announce a resolution at some time or another to be introduced into the House of Commons with reference to the relations of that House to this. Therefore, I am unable to argue the point; but I am inclined to think that, heavily as he laid the scourge on my shoulders this evening, it would have been nothing to the severity with which he would have dealt with me if I had recommended the Queen to take so unusual and unprecedented a step as to mention in the gracious Speech from the Throne a resolution relating to the relative position between estates of the Realm to be introduced in the House of Commons. The noble Marquis has said that in the speeches which I have been compelled to deliver in the country—I frankly confess that the delivery of speeches either here or in the country is never an act of spontaneous willingness on my part—that in the speeches I have been compelled to deliver in the country there has been constant variety and vacillation. I should have been grateful if he had given me some instances of that variety and vacillation, because I should have been able in that case to deal with them. What I have said from the first speech I have delivered on this question to the last is this, that the relation of this House to the other House, and the position of this House as regards one of the great parties of the State, constitutes a grave danger to the future of this country. I have further said this, that, in our opinion, the constitutional method of dealing with that situation is by a resolution in the House of Commons, and I also said this, that, in my opinion, it was not necessary or even expedient that that resolution should be introduced at once, for the obvious reason, amongst others, that a resolution must almost necessarily be followed by a dissolution, and that we saw no necessity for an immediate dissolution of Parliament. I then fail to see what the inconsistency is. I am quite aware that many minute political examiners—and I think the noble Duke below the gangway is the best of them—have thought it their duty to scan and scrutinize these speeches, not for the purpose of finding out what was in them, but what was not in them—that is the text and substance of the Resolution which Her Majesty's Government will propose to submit to the House of Commons. You may scan and scrutinise one more speech, that is the speech which I am delivering now, without, I hope, obtaining any clue to that Resolution; because it would be, in my opinion, an act of disrespect in the first and highest degree to the House in which it is to be introduced—and I hope that even the noble Marquess will admit that the House of Commons is entitled to some contemptuous consideration—it would be an act of disrespect to that House if we were to forestall the introduction of the Resolution in that House by previously describing it in this. The noble Marquess has described my attitude in this House as one of disappointment because, first, the number of my followers in this House is so small, and because consequently my attempts at reforming this House were not received with enthusiasm. I will deal with each separately. As regards my disappointment that the number of my followers is not greater, it is genuine and it is deep-seated. I admit that with regard to the House of Commons as much as with regard to the House of Lords. But what cannot be said in regard to the House of Commons can be said in regard to the House of Lords—that that minority is permanent and stereotyped in the House of Lords, while in the House of Commons it is subject to modification. As to my attempts to reform this House, they were of a modest and unambitious character. They were not, I admit, received with enthusiasm; but I hope your Lordships will pardon me when I say that I have never known of any proposition that was received in this House with enthusiasm. The noble Marquess says that I ought not to be daunted in those endeavours, but as head of the Government now it is my duty to persevere with them. My Lords, I really cannot detain the House by pointing out why, with nine-and-twenty followers, I could not induce the House to accept these drastic proposals of reform—and I confess they will be drastic—which only I could induce the Government to recommend. But there have been other attempts by other persons in a position to make such attempts to reform the House of Lords. I remember that in the Debate on the Home Rule Bill here I said, and I said it from the bottom of my heart, and shall reiterate it to the end of my life, that there was no greater reproach on the acknowledged statesmanship of the noble Marquess than his failure to deal with the question of the reform of the House, as he might have done with ease and impunity, in the six years between the passing of the Reform Bill of 1884 to the advent of the Liberals to power in 1892. But on one occasion, as he has boasted this evening, he did make the attempt. I observed that he passed very lightly over it. He said it was accepted by this House; but that is not my recollection.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: The Second Reading was passed.

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: I do not think the Second Reading was passed. But let me narrate the circumstances of the deathbed of that measure. The noble Marquess taunted us genially about the duality of our leaders. There is a leader, he said, in the House of Commons—a very powerful man; there is a leader in the House of Lords, whom the noble Marquess hinted was a very impotent or a very irresolute man; that he had to give way to his taskmasters elsewhere, and hence his melancholy vacillations at which the noble Marquess hinted, but which he did not support by quotation. But I remember another duality of leaders on this very question of reforming the House of Lords. We had an animated and discursive debate on the proposals of the noble Marquess, which, if I remember aright, consisted of the introduction of six military and six naval veterans as life Peers—the salt and leaven which lend savour and consistency to this House, and would have done away, I have no doubt, with all the objections that have been urged against its constitution. The noble Marquess was rising to reply to the animadversions made in a feeble spirit from the Opposition Benches, when at that moment a paper was placed in his hands, which he hurriedly read out, announcing that his brother leader in the House of Commons had withdrawn the Bill in that House, and that, therefore, it was unnecessary to trouble their Lordships with any further observations.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: No, no.

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: Oh yes. If you refer to "The Parliamentary Debates" you will find that I am correct.

That was the beginning and end of the last effort of the noble Marquess to attempt a great constitutional reform of the House of Lords. I think it throws some light on the question of duality of leadership. Now, my Lords, the noble Marquess ended with an impassioned appeal to this House. He said, in language which I think ought to have some justification before being used, that we were not introducing an honest Bill into this House, but merely flying kites—or snowballs I think he called them—with which we pelted the House of Lords without the slightest idea or a hope that we could pass the Bills. What are the Bills to which the noble Marquess alluded? The only Bill he dealt with was the Bill about Light Railways. He has not dealt with the substantial measures indicated in the Queen's Speech. He is not prepared to consider the Bill for the disestablishment of the Church in Wales, because he says it is not seriously intended. It is simply a missile sent by the House of Commons to harass the repose of the House of Lords. He is not prepared to consider the Measure for Amending the Irish Land Act of 1882. That, I suppose, is not a serious Measure either. It does not respond in any degree to the desires of the agricultural population of Ireland, not merely in the three provinces from which he says our supporters are mainly drawn, but also in the province of Ulster, to which he looks for Irish light and guidance. Is the Bill dealing with the liquor traffic a Bill the noble Marquess is not prepared to consider on its merits, because it is simply a missile intended to annoy this House? Is the Bill for the abolition of plural voting, which would take away from some constituencies 3,000, and from one at least 4,000 outside voters, a mere playful act of burlesque on the part of the Government, and not seriously meant? Is the provision for the payment of the expenses of returning officers at elections—the removal of one of the great bars to that democratic representation of the working classes which, I believe, the noble Marquess claims to desire as much as I do—is that Bill a playful effort of fancy on the part of the Government? We know what the noble Marquess thinks of the Bill for the unification of London, because he told us about the Report of the Commission, when he gave some thickness and consistency to that "thin partition" which was demolished a week ago by some Members of the Party below the Gangway, and which since has been so laboriously resuscitated by the noble Duke. The noble Marquess addressed words of reprobation to the Chairman of the Commission; and he treated the whole of the Report as a practical joke; but it is a practical joke to which the Government are prepared to give effect. I will not refer further to the measures in the Queen's Speech, but I ask the House—divesting our minds of Party feelings, which, after all, are not unnatural, and which I do not deprecate—whether the noble Marquess is justified in treating these Bills as mere acts of a drama, not meant for serious consideration, but merely introduced for debate in the House of Commons to be flung back by your Lordships in the month of August. I can only say that that is not our idea in presenting them. Our idea is to give an honest and honourable fulfilment to the pledges which we gave in Opposition. I quite acknowledge that the programme that was drawn up by us in Opposition was by no means a brief one. It was adopted at a Congress at which I had not the honour to be present, because I was not then taking part in public life. But it was adopted with the assent of the Liberal Party then in Opposition, and I cannot think it is a discredit to that Party that when it returns to power it should endeavour to fulfil those pledges. I am quite conscious that our majority in the House of Commons is small. I am quite conscious that it is made up of various sections, whose interests the noble Marquess thinks it is extraordinary that we should deem it necessary to consult. But as long as that majority exists it is a majority. It is something to which the noble Marquess, with all his power in this House, can lay no claim, and so long as we possess that majority we intend to use it for the redemption of the pledges which we gave in Opposition.

THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE: My Lords, in the few observations with with I shall venture to trouble your Lordships it will not, fortunately, be necessary for me, because of my position in the House, to follow the course necessarily taken by the previous speakers, in dealing at some length with the whole or portions of the subjects referred to in the Queen's Speech. I propose to refer briefly to one matter only. My noble Friend who has just sat down has protested with some warmth that the proposals enumerated in the Queen's Speech have been brought forward in a serious spirit. Well, some of the declarations which my noble Friend has been compelled to make in the country has left the views of the Government as to the probable work of the Session in a position of considerable obscurity, which, I venture to say, his present observations have not altogether dispelled. We have heard from my noble Friend that on one occasion he felt he was trifling with his hearers in speaking to them about measures which he knew, and they knew could by no possibility pass into law in the face of the obstacle presented to them by this House. The Home Secretary also has been speaking about ploughing the sands of the seashore, and I do not think it would be difficult to find abundant references of a similar character in speeches by other Ministers. On the other hand, we have been told that this Session is to be a business Session, and that the measures contained in the Queen's Speech are strictly limited to those which, in the opinion of the Government, can be and ought to be passed into law within a single Session. Well, I admit that I find a very considerable difficulty in reconciling these declarations, and in ascertaining, from the distinctions which have been made by my noble Friend, with what views the great proportion of those measures have been introduced into the Speech. I quite admit that there are some of them which the Government are fully entitled to consider necessary and practical subjects of legislation. There is the measure, to which calm and temperate reference was made by the noble Lord, dealing with the subject of Irish land. That is a subject upon which it is quite possible that Parliament may be called upon to legislate successfully. It is admitted by all, I believe, that as the time approaches for the expiration of the first period for which judicial rents have been fixed, some revision of the existing law will be found necessary; and I have not the smallest doubt that in this House, as well as in the House of Commons, every disposition will be felt to approach the consideration of this question, and of any new principle which it may be found necessary to adopt for the settlement of the relations between the landlord and tenant. I am sure that any proposals of Her Majesty's Government on that subject will be met in a perfectly fair and temperate spirit. But when we come to such other measures, as that for the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales, the Local Veto Bill, the establishment of the principle of "One Man One Vote," I inquire whether these Bills are introduced with any intention or object of being passed into law. The position of matters has altered very considerably since the Session of 1893; and with it has altered the light in which we are entitled to regard any Ministerial declarations such as are contained in the Queen's Speech. The noble Lord has told us that the legislative programme entrusted to the present Government by the election of 1892 was the largest that has ever been entrusted to any Government; and that under any circumstances it would have occupied many Sessions, and probably more than one Parliament; but that, if it had been possible for Her Majesty's Ministers to pass these measures in the order in which they were submitted to Parliament, there was no reason in the nature of things why they should not, if not in one Parliament, still in a succession of Parliaments, complete that programme. But the Government have discovered that the very first measure—the measure upon which they appealed in the first instance to the country—they are unable to pass. They have not been able to pass the Home Rule Bill. Well, my Lords, if the House of Lords, holding the opinion which he did, that the Government had received no such mandate from the country as would justify them in accepting that Bill, passed by a very small majority through the House of Commons—if the House of Lords thought that they were justified in rejecting that Bill, and if the Government afterwards calmly acquiesced in that rejection, what reason can they have for supposing that the House of Lords is likely to take a different view of the large number of equally controversial matters, of which the Government themselves protest that they have even a less mandate and less popular opinion behind them? I think we are justified in saying that these Bills are not introduced for the purpose of being passed. They are introduced because, for some reason or other, good or bad, it is thought desirable that they should be brought into the House of Commons, discussed in the House of Commons, and perhaps forced through the House of Commons, and brought up to this House. But that they are intended to pass into law is a contention which is not seriously made even by Her Majesty's Government themselves. I do not deny that there may be advantages in obtaining a full Parliamentary discussion of measures which there is no probability of passing in the same Session. Arguments may be met, difficulties may be smoothed away, objections may be removed. That is a process which has been over and over again resorted to; and by full discussion it has come about that measures, which, at their introduction, have been violently opposed, have ultimately received the Assent of Parliament. But has the experience of the Government with reference to the measures introduced during the present Parliament been of that description? Is it possible to contend that any argument, which was conclusive in the minds of those opposed to Home Rule, has been met in the course of the Debates on the Home Rule measure? Is it the fact that a single difficulty or obstacle in the way of Home Rule has been smoothed away or removed? I think the most conclusive proof that that is not the opinion of the Government themselves or of their supporters is given by the action of the Irish Members. I will do the Irish Nationalist Members the justice to believe that they desire ardently to see the establishment of a Legislature in Dublin some day. I believe they consider that to be the main object of their political existence. Well, if they thought that the Debates of the Home Rule Bill in this country and in these Houses had been such as to exercise any favourable effect upon the mind of the people of England, and to induce them to give a verdict in favour of Home Rule, should they hereafter be separately consulted on that subject, is it conceivable for one moment that these Irish Members, by whose support the present Government exists, would acquiesce in the shelving of Home Rule by that Government, not only for a single Session, but as we see now, for a second Session, and perhaps even for a second Parliament? It seems to me evident that, in the opinion of the Government, and in the opinion of their supporters, the Irish members, no such useful purpose has been served by the discussions in Parliament of this measure as in the slightest degree to advance its position as a Parliamentary question. Then, I ask whether the Government are going to introduce these equally contentious and unimportant matters with any hope that they will lead to any other result? No, my Lords. The object with which these measures are introduced is, that they may be of certain benefit to the Government. The majority which they know they cannot obtain in favour of any one of them they hope they may be able to obtain by combinations and management. If the Irish Members, if those who are in favour of Welsh Disestablishment, if those who are in favour of the Local Veto Bill, can each be induced to believe that their own measures—those in which they take an interest themselves—can only obtain a majority in support of them by the assistance of all those interested in the others, then that Parliamentary majority in the House of Commons may be obtained which they know cannot be obtained in support of any of those measures individually and separately presented. This policy has already been tried, and tried with a partial success. It is true that Her Majesty's Government have not been able to pass any of their measures or to redeem any of their pledges. There is not a single one of those measures which were referred to by my noble Friend, as having been agreed to at the Newcastle Conference, which has been passed into law. But the policy which has been pursued of forcing those measures through the House of Commons has had the effect of securing and retaining for the Government the small, but at the same time adequate, majority which secures to the country the inestimable advantage of their administrative services. So long as Her Majesty's advisers are content with this humble, if not brilliant, measure of success, I do not know that the Unionist Party have any great cause to complain. I think, however, that it is probably not a Parliamentary position which can be indefinitely continued with any advantage to the country; and I think it probable that the country will, before very long, become tired of an Administration which, apparently, does not possess the courage or conviction which is required to stake its existence upon any of the legislative proposals, by the support and advocacy of which it came into power. But, my Lords, as has been stated by the noble Marquess opposite, I think that it is rather with something which is not contained in the Speech, than with anything which is contained in the Speech, that the mind of the country is at present chiefly occupied. The declarations which have been made in the speech of my noble Friend, the Prime Minister, will chiefly be examined and scrutinised in the country with a view to obtaining some light as to the time and manner in which their policy as regards the relations of the two Houses is to be disclosed. My noble Friend has told us that he has no intention of divulging before the time the Resolution which is to be the first act of this revolution; but his reticence extends even beyond an unwillingness to give us the terms of the Resolution, for we have not heard from him an intimation as to the period of the Session in which this momentous Resolution is to be moved. We know from the public declarations of my noble Friend that, in his opinion, the time has come, or nearly come, for a free popular reference to the people which shall settle the Constitution once for all. We know that, in his opinion, the issue which is thus raised is a tremendous one; we know that it is to be accomplished by a Resolution submitted to the House of Commons. I submit to your Lordships, and to the Government, that scarcely too much time, notice, or information can be given to the country which is to be called upon to decide upon an issue so presented and so described. It is scarcely conceivable that it is the intention of the Government to raise an issue of this description by a Resolution brought forward at the fag-end of a Session in a House of Commons exhausted by a discussion of multifarious and important questions which are to be submitted to its consideration. It is scarcely conceivable that these proposals are going to be submitted to Parliament at a time when your Lordships' House is occupied in the consideration of some other measures which are to be sent up from the other House, and when it will be impossible for it to be heard in its own defence. It is impossible to conceive that the country is going to be asked to decide upon this tremendous issue with no information before it except such as it is able to obtain from a hurried Debate in a dying Parliament. It is almost impossible to conceive that such a course of procedure should enter into the minds of responsible statesmen; but I think it is less conceivable that such a course of procedure will recommend itself to the sense of justice and of fairplay of the nation. It is not in our power to force the hands of the Government or compel them to make any disclosure of their policy which they may consider premature. It is a curious commentary on the imaginary claim which this House is supposed to make on behalf of its statutory or equal authority with that of the House of Commons, when it is not even in the power of this House to extract from Her Majesty's Ministers a declaration of the time or the terms in which the question, so vital to themselves, is to be brought forward. I think we may rest assured that, whenever and however, this measure is brought forward and submitted to the House of Commons or to the country, no apprehension or misgiving need be felt by this House as to an attack which is being conducted apparently with so much hesitation, so much doubt, so much vacillation, as that which is at present threatened on the privileges of this House.

Address agreed to, *nemine dissentiente*, and ordered to be presented to Her Majesty by the Lords with White Staves.

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

The EARL OF MORLEY appointed, *nemine dissentiente*, to take the Chair in all Committees of this House for this Session.

APPEAL COMMITTEE—Appointed.

NEW BILL.

The ARCHBISHOP of CANTERBURY presented a Bill to amend the law relating to the transfer and exercise of Church Patronage.

Bill, *pro forma*, read 1ª.

House adjourned at twenty minutes past Seven o'clock, till Thursday, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 5th February 1895.

The House met at a quarter before Two of the clock.

Message to attend the Lords Commissioners :—

The House went :—and being returned :—

NEW WRITS DURING THE RECESS.

MR. SPEAKER intimated that, in accordance with the Acts of Parliament regulating the issue of Writs during the Recess, the following Writs had been issued during the past Recess :—

For the Borough of Birkenhead, *v.* Viscount Bury, called to the House of Peers as Earl of Albemarle; for the County of Sutherland, *v.* Mr. Angus Sutherland, appointed Chairman of the Fishery Board for Scotland; for the County of Forfar, *v.* Sir John Rigby, appointed a Lord Justice of Appeal; for the City of York, *v.* Mr. Frank Lockwood, appointed Solicitor-General; for the County of Lincoln (North Lindsey or Brigg Division), *v.* Mr. S. D. Waddy, appointed Recorder of Sheffield; for the County of Worcester (Evesham Division), *v.* Sir E. Lechmere, deceased.

ELECTIONS.

Ordered, That all Members who are returned for two or more places in any part of the United Kingdom do make their election for which of the places they will serve, within one week after it shall appear that there is no question upon the Return for that place; and if any thing shall come in question touching the Return or Election of any Member, he is to withdraw during the time the matter is in debate; and that all Members returned upon double Returns do withdraw till their Returns are determined.

Resolved, That no Peer of the Realm, except such Peers of Ireland as shall for the time being be actually elected, and shall not have declined to serve, for any county, city, or borough of Great Britain, hath any right to give his vote in the Election of any Member to serve in Parliament.

Resolved, That it is a high infringement of the liberties and privileges of the Commons of the United Kingdom for any Lord of Parliament, or other Peer or Prelate, not being a Peer of Ireland at the time elected, and not having declined to serve for any county, city, or borough of Great Britain, to concern himself in the Election of Members to serve for the Commons in Parliament, except only a Peer of Ireland, at such Elections in Great Britain respectively where such Peer shall appear as a Candidate, or by himself, or any others, be proposed to be elected; or for any Lord Lieutenant or Governor of any county to avail himself of any authority derived from his Commission, to influence the Election of any Member to serve for the Commons in Parliament.

Resolved, That if it shall appear that any person hath been elected or returned a Member of this House, or endeavoured so to be, by Bribery, or any other Corrupt Practices, this House will proceed with the utmost severity against all such persons as shall have been wilfully concerned in such Bribery or other Corrupt Practices.

WITNESSES.

Resolved, That if it shall appear that any person hath been tampering with any Witness, in respect of his evidence to be given to this House, or any Committee thereof, or directly or indirectly hath endeavoured to deter or hinder any person from appearing or giving evidence, the same is declared to be a high crime and misdemeanor; and this House will proceed with the utmost severity against such offender.

Resolved, That if it shall appear that any person hath given false evidence in any case before this House, or any Committee thereof, this House will proceed with the utmost severity against such offender.

METROPOLITAN POLICE.

Ordered, That the Commissioners of the Police of the Metropolis do take care that, during the Session of Parliament, the passages through the street leading to this House be kept free and open, and that no obstruction be permitted to hinder the passage of Members to and from this House, and that no disorder be allowed in Westminster Hall, or in the passages leading to this House, during the Sitting of Parliament, and that there be no annoyance therein or thereabouts: And that the Sergeant-at-Arms attending this House do communicate this Order to the Commissioners aforesaid.

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS.

Ordered, That the Votes and Proceedings of this House be printed, being first perused by Mr. Speaker; and that he do appoint the printing thereof; and that no person but such as he shall appoint do presume to print the same.

PRIVILEGES.

Ordered, That a Committee of Privileges be appointed.

OUTLAWRIES BILL.

"Bill for the more effectual preventing Clandestine Outlawries," read the first time; to be read a second time.

JOURNAL.

Ordered, That the Journal of the House, from the end of last Session to the end of the present Session, with an Index thereto, be printed.

Ordered, That 750 Copies of the said Journal and Index be printed by the appointment and under the direction of Sir Reginald Francis Douce Palgrave, K.C.B., the Clerk of this House.

Ordered, That the said Journal and Index be printed by such person as shall be licensed by Mr. Speaker, and that no other person do presume to print the same.

HOUSE OF COMMONS ACCOMMODATION, 1894.

Copy ordered,

Of Statement of the Alterations which have been carried out in accordance with the recommendations of a Select Committee of this House.—(*Mr. H. Gladstone.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 1.]

ALIEN IMMIGRATION.

Copy ordered,

Of Return of the number of Aliens that arrived from the Continent at Ports in the United Kingdom in each month of the year 1895.—(*Mr. Burt.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table; and to be printed. [No. 2.]

TRADE AND NAVIGATION.

Copy ordered,

Of Accounts relating to Trade and Navigation of the United Kingdom for each month during the year 1895.—(*Mr. Burt.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table; and to be printed. [No. 3.]

CIVIL CONTINGENCIES FUND, 1893-4.

Copy ordered,

Of Accounts showing—

(1) The Receipts and Payments in connection with the Fund in the year ended the 31st day of March, 1894;

(2) The distribution of the Capital of the Fund at the commencement and close of the year;

together with the Correspondence with the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.—(*Sir J. Hibbert.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 4.]

NEW MEMBERS SWORN.

Henry Broadhurst, esquire, for Borough of Leicester.

Walter Hazell, esquire, for Borough of Leicester.

Sir F. Lockwood Q.C., for City of York.

Elliott Lees, esquire, for Borough of Birkenhead.

Samuel Morris, esquire, for County Kilkenny (South Division).

John McLeod, esquire, for Sutherland County.

Hon. Charles Maule Ramsay for Forfar County.

John Maunsell Richardson, esquire, for Lincoln County (North Lindsey, or Brigg Division).

Colonel Long for Worcestershire (Evesham Division).

NEW WRIT.

For the Southern Division of the Borough of Paddington, *v.* Lord Randolph Churchill, deceased.—(*Mr. Akers Douglas.*)

THE LEICESTER ELECTION.

SIR HENRY JAMES (Bury), said he wished to occupy the attention of the House for a short time on a matter of procedure which seemed to him to raise a question of Privilege. It related to what he believed was an irregularity in the return of the two hon. Gentlemen who had just taken their seats as Representatives of the Borough of Leicester, an irregularity which caused the return not to be complete or valid. It would be in the recollection of the House that the Secretary to the Treasury made two distinct motions in August last. He first moved for a Writ for the return of a Member in the place of Sir James Whitehead. Then came a second motion for a second election to take place. One election had only taken place, and therefore there ought to have been only one return made, but two returns had been made. They must deal with this subject from two points of view—the one as it affected the constituency, and the other as it affected the House. It was important that the House should see that its Orders were obeyed and its Precepts observed. On the first question he had nothing to say, because no elector had petitioned the House. In the second place, when the irregularity was pointed out, those most interested in the election met and agreed that, whatever should be the result of the election, it should be binding upon all candidates and their supporters, and that no objection should be made to it. He saw no objection to such a course being taken; and he was sure that all would agree that after that agreement had been made it ought to be loyally carried out. In these circumstances he did not think they were bound to consider the interests of the constituency; but the question still remained whether, if it were the case that no election had been validly held, and if these two gentlemen who had now taken their seats had not been elected, and were consequently Strangers in the House, they should be allowed to sit there. If there were a way out of the difficulty he should be glad if these gentlemen could retain their seats; but if there was no valid return they were not entitled to sit. It was impossible the House could let that subject pass without taking notice of it. It was entirely a question for the House to determine, and he would therefore take this early opportunity of asking the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he saw any objection to this matter being referred to, and considered by, a Committee such as that which sat last Session to determine the position of the Eldest Sons of Peers sitting in this House. Such a Committee would inquire into the question whether that election had been properly held or not.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT): My right hon. and learned Friend has stated the case with great candour. He has not entered into any elaborate arguments on the subject, and he has therefore precluded me from doing so. Although I do not share his views I should be prepared to give reasons why I think that the course he has suggested would not be an inconvenient, but a possible, one under the circumstances. I will only give one illustration: Suppose there had been two elections on the same day and there were two candidates, and suppose a third candidate stood, as he might have done if there were separate elections, against both, and had been returned against both, then he would hold both seats for Leicester. My right hon. Friend has fairly avoided putting reasons before the House, but he has asked that the matter shall be examined into by a Committee. It would not be incumbent on the part of the Government to oppose such an inquiry; and I shall be happy to confer with my right hon. Friend as to the terms of the Resolution.

SIR H. JAMES then gave notice that on Thursday or Friday he would move that the matter be referred to a Committee in the terms of a motion to be agreed upon with the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

THE BALLOT FOR BILLS AND MOTIONS.

SIR W. HARCOURT said it was found convenient last Session that motions should not be taken by Ballot in the House, but that they should be taken in a Committee Room. The original arrangement was not found exactly to suit the convenience of all Members, and afterwards it was subjected to a modification which he believed was found to have given general satisfaction. He therefore now gave notice that on Wednesday, at the commencement of Business, he would move:—

> "That all Members who desire to ballot, whether for Bills or motions, for the first four Tuesdays of the Session do hand in their names at the Table during the Sittings on Tuesday and Wednesday, and that a copy of such notices be handed in at the latest during the Sitting of the House on Thursday, and that no Bills other than Government Bills be introduced in anticipation of the Ballot; and that the Ballot for Bills and motions be taken on Thursday at noon in Grand Committee Rooms Numbers 10 and 11."

MINISTERIAL NOTICES OF MOTION.

THE HOME SECRETARY (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): I beg to give notice that on Thursday I shall ask leave to bring in a Bill to terminate the Establishment of the Church of England in Wales and Monmouthshire, and to make Provision in respect to the Temporalities thereof.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-on-Tyne): I beg to give notice that on Thursday I shall ask leave to bring in a Bill to further amend the Law relating to the Occupation and Ownership of Land in Ireland, and for other purposes relating thereto. I also give notice that on Thursday I shall ask leave to bring in a Bill to provide for the Supply of Seed Potatoes for Occupiers and Cultivators of Land in Ireland.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I beg to give notice that on Thursday I shall ask leave to bring in a Bill to establish Local Control over the Traffic in Intoxicating Liquors.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. BRYCE, Aberdeen, S.): I beg to give notice that on Thursday I shall ask leave to bring in a Bill to facilitate the Construction of Light Railways in Great Britain.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir GEO. O. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): I beg to give notice that on Thursday I shall ask leave to introduce a Bill to make further Provision for County Government in Scotland and other purposes.

THE SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Sir W. FOSTER, Derby, Ilkeston): On behalf of the President of the Local Government Board, I have to give notice that on Thursday he will ask leave to bring in a Bill to prohibit Plural Voting at Parliamentary Elections, and to provide for taking the Polls at Parliamentary Elections on One Day.

THE QUEEN'S SPEECH.

MR. SPEAKER reported Her Majesty's Speech, made that day, by Her Chancellor, and read it to the House.

ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO HER MAJESTY'S MOST GRACIOUS SPEECH.

MR. C. E. H. HOBHOUSE (Wilts., Devizes), moved the Address in reply to the Queen's Speech. He said: Mr. Speaker,—The fact that the Speech to which I rise to move an Address contains no lengthened reference to foreign affairs, is a matter of congratulation to the House. The vastness of our Empire renders it almost necessary, from time to time, that we should come in contact, in some part of the world or another with a number of foreign countries. We have lately been in contact with the French nation in West Africa, and the delimitation of our territory there has been satisfactorily settled by an agreement recently made between the two Powers, which must be gratifying, both to ourselves and the French nation, for whom we entertain friendly feelings. Sir, in Europe at the present moment everything appears to make for peace, despite the fact that, since this House last met, the greatest guarantee for peace that this generation has seen—I mean the late Czar of Russia—has passed away; and while in him all lovers of peace have lost a great security for the continuance of European peace, and we lament his death and feel for the nation which has suffered so severe a loss, it must be welcome to us that his successor should, at the commencement of his reign, have evinced so friendly a feeling towards Great Britain. While the prospects of peace in Europe are bright, it is unfortunate that there should be in the East war going on between China and Japan—a war that must be fraught not merely with distress to them, but danger to our own commerce in those parts; and it is desirable, both in the interests of China and Japan and ourselves, that by either the mutual good sense of the two nations concerned, or the friendly intervention of some neutral Power, or the forbearance of the victorious nation, an end should be put to strife which, if it continue for a lengthened period, may lead to complications and difficulties, the end of which is not easily foreseen. Passing from this brief glance at foreign affairs to say something about domestic legislation, the first point that strikes one in reading the Queen's Speech is a matter of congratulation, not merely to the Ministry, but to all parties in this House—that the policy of conciliation and clemency so successfully pursued during the past three years should have brought about a state of affairs so satisfactory that crime in Ireland has diminished to an extent hitherto unknown in the annals of the country. It must be, I think, satisfactory that, while Ireland was so agitated and disturbed some few years ago, it should, when the rule of restraint which formerly prevailed has been relaxed, have become so tranquil. In developing that policy of conciliation, some measure dealing with the Land Question is essentially necessary. If I may say so, the peculiarity which will mark the Bill shortly to be introduced will be that, while other Land Bills relating to Ireland have been the result, if not perhaps the cause, of great divergence of opinion, the present Bill will be recommended to this House, not merely by one section of the Irish Party, but by the almost unanimous opinion and consent of the Irish representatives. It will receive not merely the cordial goodwill and co-operation of the Southern and Western parts of Ireland, but the assent of the Northern province of Ulster as well. To continue and complete our recent policy towards Ireland, I say there is no responsible man, in this House or out of it, who does not feel that some measure of relief must be given to the Evicted Tenants. The Bill which came before the House last Session, was condemned on one side of the House as extravagant, and on the other as inadequate. But whatever may be the character of the present Bill, legislation for the Evicted Tenants is urgently, I might almost say desperately, needed. Passing from the consideration of Irish affairs, we come to the question of the Church Establishment in Wales. The revision of the connection between Church and State in Wales is imperative. In this House there are fifteen-sixteenths of the Welsh representatives bound by every pledge of honour to press for it. Two out of every three of the Welsh electors have voted in the hope that this question may be favourably considered from their point of view. And it is necessary and right that the Government should enter on the question not with the idea of maintaining any particular religious institution, and certainly not in the hope of diffusing any particular religious feeling, but rather that they should deal with it in the hope of allaying discontent, and satisfying what I think may be considered the lawful wishes and aspirations of the Welsh people. I would go even further and say, that when this question is settled in the direction indicated by the Bill, of which notice has recently been given, the Church in Wales —with which I am quite in sympathy as far as its religious needs are concerned —will not be weakened but strengthened. To continue the consideration of the legislative programme for England, I wish to refer to the question of the abolition of plural voting. I have never been able to understand on what principle the system of plural voting is maintained. It cannot be on the consideration of wealth. It is well known that a man might own considerable properties in houses, land, or industrial undertakings, which could be concentrated in one constituency. The owner, too, of a small property, or perhaps only the nominal owner, might find an arbitrary line divides this small property into two, and places one in one electoral area and another in another. The richer man, who is supposed to have "a stake in the country," as it is called, finds himself reduced to one vote at a Parliamentary election, but the less wealthy obtains two or three because of the arbitrary division of his property. It seems to me that is not logical. Then it is not direct or indirect taxation which entitles a man to a Parliamentary vote. It is well known that a considerable class of the population, who pay no taxes directly or indirectly, have obtained votes. It seems to me that the reason why a vote should be given to a man is, that he may take some share in the consideration and creation of the laws under which he must exist. If that be so it stands to reason that a rich man ought not to have a greater voting power than a poor one has. The one ground upon which a citizen should be entitled to exercise the franchise is that he has given proof of his citizenship by having resided for a certain term in a particular town or in a particular county, and in that case he ought to have a vote for the particular locality in which he resides and for no other. I am glad to see the reference that is made in the most gracious Speech from the Throne, and the proposal that is put forward for the relief of that important industry by facilitating the construction of Light Railways. We know that it is impossible to aid Agriculture in a more important way than by bringing the producer and the consumer into more close communication and by enabling the produce to be brought to market in the most expeditious and cheapest manner. By the Local Government Act of last year provision was made for the creation of small holdings, and I trust that by the formations of these light railways we shall secure the profitable working of those holdings by enabling their produce to be brought to market at cheap rates. We are not yet aware of the precise method by which Her Majesty's Government proposal is to be carried into effect, but at any rate the construction of these light railways will provide work for the large amount of labour that is at present unfortunately unemployed. In concluding my remarks, in the course of making which I trust that I have not unduly occupied the time of the House, I should wish to refer to the two measures relating to Scotland which are indicated from the Speech from the Throne. The one is the measure for the completion of the system of Local Government in Scotland, and the other is to bring about further legislation in respect of the Crofter population of that country. Both those measures I trust will prove of material benefit to the community living in the northern part of this Island. I beg to move the Address in answer to the most gracious Speech from the Throne.

*MR. W. H. HOLLAND (Salford, N.) said, I rise to second the Address which my hon. Friend has just moved with so much ability, and in doing so I feel that I can rely upon the kindly forbearance and consideration of this House which is usually extended to those who occupy my position. We may congratulate ourselves that the Treasury Bench is so well filled and that its occupants have come here in such good spirits to discharge their arduous task. It is somewhat of a surprise that this should be the case in view of the alarming bulletins which we have seen in the newspapers of late concerning the misfortunes which have overtaken them. On one day they were said to be in a state of rapid decline; on the next they had so far recovered their strength and vigour that they were fighting amongst themselves like cats and dogs. Their physical condition was grave, but their mental ailments were graver still; so that the surprise to-day is all the more agreeable to find them looking so well equipped for the work which lies before them. Turning from the Treasury Bench to the Front Opposition Bench, we see a great gap there. By the death of Lord Randolph Churchill there has been extinguished a bright constellation from the firmament of this House. I had not myself the advantage of being a Member during the too short period of his Leadership, but I hear on all hands that the impression he then produced was altogether favourable, and that he won golden opinions by his courtesy and tact. With all our differences, Mr. Speaker, important as they are in substance, and ardent as they are in form, we are not blind to the good qualities of our opponents. Lord Randolph Churchill had many. A dashing Leader; brilliant in debate; of fearless courage, resolute will, ready wit—these were great as well as good qualities. And when great qualities are consecrated to the service of the State, their loss becomes a Nation's loss, even in this case an Empire's loss. And this Parliament as representing that Empire is poorer to-day in consequence. Her Majesty's Government have referred to the friendly relations that exist between this country and foreign nations. Happily we are accustomed to such announcements, but the peace which we are now enjoying is largely due to the great ability with which our foreign affairs are managed by the Foreign Office, and to the way Ambassadors and representatives at foreign Courts conduct their delicate and difficult tasks. I am sure that in all quarters of this House the hope is entertained that this happy condition of things may long continue. I think that it is one of the finest features of our political life that, although we may be divided by very sharp lines with regard to our internal affairs, yet when we approach the consideration of our foreign affairs we remember not whether we are Liberal or Tory, but that we are citizens of a mighty Empire, whose glory we are resolved, by God's help, shall not be dimmed. I entirely concur with the observations which have fallen from my hon. Friend with reference to the death of the late Czar of Russia. In him the world has lost a great ruler, whose life afforded us one of the greatest securities for peace. Moreover, he was closely connected with our own Royal Family, upon whom no sorrow can fall without their receiving the sympathy of all loyal subjects. Great hopes are entertained in regard to his successor, with whom the most cordial relations have been established. It is happily not the case that increased cordiality with one Power involves diminished cordiality with some other Power. Cordiality is not a commodity of fixed and limited amount. Otherwise it would be true that the more you gave to one, the less there would be left for another. But in point of fact I believe, Mr. Speaker, that a wise and considerate diplomacy can increase the cordiality of our relations all round. I am sorry to be obliged to refer to the lamentable war that at the present time is devastating China, and on grounds both of humanity—in which all Nations have perhaps an equal share; and of commerce—in which no Nation has a share for a moment comparable to our own—we can only hope that it will be brought to a speedy close. Her Majesty's Government are to be commended for having promoted a concert with other Powers and for the vigilance they are continually exercising in this important matter. Public opinion has been deeply stirred by the occurrences which have lately taken place in Armenia, and it is satisfactory to know that the Government are fully alive to the responsibilities which have been thrown upon them by the Treaty of Berlin and other Treaties. We have a right to expect that the presence of delegates from Great Britain, France, and Russia will ensure that the excesses shall be thoroughly investigated, that the offenders shall be adequately punished, and that the witnesses shall be fully and effectively protected. Reference is made in the Speech to the Estimates of the coming year. Those Estimates will be of peculiar interest in view of the great fiscal changes which were made in the course of last Session. Then comes the "Bill of Fare" for the Session. I am sure the House will agree that it is by no means a scanty one. It contains many familiar dishes. Some of them indeed have proved to be a kind of *pièce de résistance* in previous Sessions. I will not ask why it shall be necessary to introduce and re-introduce some measures Session after Session in this way, because the reply would be of too controversial a character for the present occasion. First, there comes the case of Ireland. I appeal to the Leader of the Opposition, that surely it cannot, under any circumstances, be accounted discreditable to the present Chief Secretary, that crime in Ireland has fallen to the lowest ebb ever placed upon record. I think I might appeal to the House, which contains on both sides many capable statesmen, whether it is not wise to use the present time of quiet, in order to settle, in a calm and just spirit, the thorny and passion-provoking question of Irish land. Next, there is a course provided for dealing with the Church Establishment in Wales, and I think that the least controversial remark that I can make on that topic is to ask whether, when a Welsh measure is demanded persistently and consistently throughout a long series of years, it is not in the interests of representative Government, when it is demanded by almost the unanimous voice of the Welsh Representatives, that this measure should be met with consideration and attention at the hands of the House. The next course provided is one for which many are hungering—or, perhaps more correctly, thirsting—namely, a new Liquor Bill. This House's previous Liquor Bills have, for some reason or other, not been paid. Whether they have been too long or too heavy I need not say. In regard to the new Liquor Bill we understand, from the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer the other day at Derby, that some alteration is to be made in the Bill, and that there is to be provided a sort of half-way house, not for purposes of refreshment, but for the votes of the people; and under this new measure it seems likely that a total abstainer may vote for prohibition; if he so choose, and a moderate man may vote for a reduction in the number of licences, if he prefer this course. I think that this additional option will mean a great improvement in the measure, and will be likely to enlarge the utility of the Bill, and ought to secure, in my opinion, the support of all sorts of Temperance reformers, of whom I understand even the Trade contains many. Another dish to be served up is Returning Officers' Expenses. Increased Labour Representation in this House is generally desired; but these charges constitute an initial and often an insuperable barrier to its accomplishment, and I think that the introduction of this Bill is but the natural sequence of the Resolution passed by the House, on May 25 last. These measures constitute a somewhat large Bill of Fare, and if any course is not very well cooked, and done to a turn, we may be sure that hon. Gentlemen opposite, with their critical and fastidious palates, will turn up their noses at it. I do not believe, however, they will have reason to complain, as the courses will be prepared by a first-class *chef*. The keynote of Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech from the Throne is, concerted action abroad—in China and in Armenia; and conciliation at home—in Ireland and in Labour Disputes. And in my humble judgment these are the best signs of good statesmanship; and I do not think that the Admiralty and the War Office with all their resources contain in their armoury such strong weapons as concerted action in regard to Foreign Affairs and conciliation in Home Affairs. This Assembly is now in a calm and peaceable frame of mind, but none can say how long this will last: it is always possible for a Session to come in like a lamb, but to go out like a lion. But whether there be calm or storm before us, hon. Gentlemen opposite won't think any the worse of us when I say that, so long as the Government continue to show unflinching determination, unfailing courage, and unwavering purpose in giving effect to the mandate of the electors—[*Opposition Laughter, cries of* "Oh!" and *Ministerial Cheers*]—and we understand it, because the mandate was ours and not the property of hon. Gentlemen on the other side—so long may they rely on the loyal and hearty support of hon. Members on this side of the House.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): Mr. Speaker,—The Mover and Seconder of the Address have performed, with tact and ability, a task which I always think one of the most delicate and difficult which can be thrown on the shoulders of Members of this House. I was especially grateful for some words which fell from the hon. Member who seconded the Address, in regard to the great loss which the public and this House have recently sustained by the death of Lord Randolph Churchill. Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member spoke, as it was right and proper that he should, only as a public representative of the people, not connected with Lord Randolph Churchill; with no ties of friendship, but merely giving his judgment upon that brilliant and too short career which has now unhappily been brought to a close. I thank him for the words which he let fall on this subject, and I am sure that they met an echo in the heart of every man in this House. For myself I cannot regard this merely as a loss to the House and to the country, for I was connected by ties of intimate friendship with Lord Randolph Churchill through the whole period of his active public life, and to me, therefore, his death means not merely the loss of an eminent and most distinguished Member of this House, but of a friend with whom almost all the events of my public life are intimately bound up. I entirely agree with what fell from the hon. Gentleman when he said that the genius and ability of Members of this House are not the property of one Party alone. The dignity and honour of the House, its credit and authority with the country, largely depend upon the fact that we have succeeded in producing and in educating a continuous succession of able public men, to whom can safely be intrusted the affairs of Parliament and of the country. The loss we have sustained, from this point of view, is great indeed, and I cannot hope that it will be easily supplied. I pass from this question to subjects more intimately connected with the Speech from the Throne; and, as following, in the usual way, that order which those responsible for that Speech have observed, I will say a word, in the first place, upon the subject of Foreign Affairs. Sir, it will be in the recollection of all Members in this House that, during the two and a half years that have elapsed since the present Government came into Office, we have never thought it consistent with our duty to the country to endeavour to turn any incidents that have arisen in that period in connection with the Foreign Policy of the Government to any Party account. I do not say that as desiring to claim any special credit or any special patriotism for the present Opposition. But I do lay it down as a general principle, which, in my judgment, all Oppositions ought to pursue, that, when the Government of the day is, so far as can be judged, endeavouring to the best of its ability to carry out objects which are held by both Parties to be objects of importance to the country, no good is done by discussing all the particular modes by which those ends are to be attained. In saying this, it must not be taken, of course, that we have admired every Diplomatic step which Her Majesty's

Government have pursued during the past two years. If it had been necessary or desirable I might have pointed to certain transactions in regard to Siam, and their policy with respect to certain treaties in Africa; but I do not think that the Government is more likely to steer a judicious course if the Opposition were always to be putting their hand on the tiller. So long, therefore, as the objects of the Government are objects with which we agree, and believe to be sound in the interests of the country, the Government would, in my opinion, not do better but worse were we to adopt a course of criticism which might lead to misunderstanding abroad—a course which must embarrass a Foreign Minister, and which would not be likely to guide him; and we shall, therefore, abstain in the future from doing anything which, in our judgment, will in any way interfere with the conduct of the details of the Foreign Policy which the Government have rightly pursued. I make this statement of the general principles on which we act, because I do not mean to say one single word upon the first four paragraphs of the Speech; and I wish it to be distinctly understood, by all who hear me, that it is not because we do not think that they are matters of great public interest and importance, on which we may have our opinions, were it desirable to express them, but because I am convinced that harm and not good would be done by any public utterances which might very easily cause misunderstanding abroad, and cannot easily do much good at home. I, therefore, Sir, leave the first part of the Speech without uttering a single word of comment, advice, or warning with regard to any of the important matters with which it deals, and will proceed to ask a question with regard to the sentence which deals with the Estimates for the year. I do not know whether it was an intentional omission, or a regard for what I have no doubt has been our practice so far, but I noticed that there is no mention of the Navy, or of the expenditure on the Navy. The question of Naval Policy, if my memory does not fail me, stands at the present moment thus: Last year the Government announced a large, I do not say too large, far from it, but a large measure of Naval construction, together with a considerable amount of expenditure on dockyards. The amount that was actually quoted, or put on the Estimates for last year, was adequate for the objects stated; but everybody acquainted with these matters is aware that the full pressure of the expenditure upon ships does not come in the year in which those ships are laid down, but in the succeeding years, whilst the ships are in course of construction. Under the system pursued by the late Government, there could be no question but that when the policy of Naval construction was begun it would be pressed on with the utmost possible speed until it was completed. I do not mean to argue whether our system or the Government's is the best, but it will be admitted by the Government themselves that theirs, at all events, does not carry with it that absolute necessity. It is in the power of the Treasury, or of the Government for the time being, if it happens to suit their financial policy, to slacken off the work which has been begun and not to press forward the building programme. I should like to have an assurance from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the fact that the Government is not bound by statute, as it were, to press on the work of Naval construction with the utmost rapidity is not going to be used by them as an excuse for slackening off the work, and if we may expect that the full amount of money required this year for pressing on the Naval programme will be proposed by the Government, and ultimately, no doubt, voted by Parliament. I have no reason to doubt that the Government mean to carry out that policy, but I think, in view of the silence of the Queen's Speech on the subject, it would be desirable that the House should be left in no doubt on the point, as it is of incomparably more importance to the Empire and the country than any other single question touched upon in the Queen's Speech. Before coming to the programme of Domestic legislation I notice that there is a paragraph, which was very properly referred to by both Mover and Seconder of the Address, dealing with the diminution of agrarian offences in Ireland.

MR. J. MORLEY: Of all offences.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: How far this improved condition of things is due to the action of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland I do not venture to pronounce, but that he is to be congratulated, and the whole House is to be congratulated, upon the happy state of things announced will, I think, be admitted as cordially on this as upon the other side of the Table. I noticed that the Mover of the Address, in a speech which was certainly not marked by any controversial bitterness, suggested that the improvement in Ireland was due to the policy of clemency—so he described it—which has been pursued by the present Chief Secretary. There was, perhaps, just a slight touch of controversial imputation in that observation, but I do not mean to take up seriously the challenge thus thrown down. I will only point out that as the diminution of crime appears, by the Chief Secretary's interruption, to refer to every species of crime and not merely to agrarian crime—although, I do not imagine that that policy of clemency has anything to do with pickpockets—there are other causes at work than those to which he has referred. The fact is that the improved condition in Ireland has not been going on merely for the last three years, but is the culmination of a continuous process dating back now for eight or ten years. Now, Sir, I come to domestic legislation. I do not mean to deal with these Bills in detail; some of them are very old friends. Only two of them, I think, are entirely new, one relating to a very old subject, the relations between Landlord and Tenant in Ireland, the other to the government of the Metropolis. With regard to the first of these measures, I notice that the paragraph dealing with the subject is ambiguous in its terms, and nothing fell from either Mover or Seconder to clear up the doubt which the language of the Speech from the Throne had suggested. The paragraph may be read as meaning that in this Bill are to be introduced clauses dealing with the evicted tenants. I should like very much to know from the Chancellor of the Exchequer or the Chief Secretary whether that paragraph refers to two Bills or one Bill; whether, in other words, there is to be one Bill dealing with the ordinary relations between Landlord and Tenant in Ireland and with the evicted tenants, or whether these two subjects are to be embodied in two separate measures. If they are to be dealt with in one measure, all I can say is, if the history of the past is to afford any guide for the future, that as there are no measures ever brought before this House which more naturally and more necessarily beget difficulty and prolonged discussion than Bills dealing with Irish land, if you are going to include in a measure of that kind a set of controversial clauses dealing with evicted tenants, which last year formed the subject of a separate measure, it appears to me you are unduly weighing any proposals you may lay before us, and that those who wish to see the Irish land question dealt with in a spirit of practical legislation will have good reason to complain of your proceeding. The Irish Land Question has been in process of being finally settled, not only during the whole course of my Parliamentary career, but long before that course began, and sometimes the fact that Ireland is quiet, and more often the fact that Ireland is not quiet, has been given as the reason why at last this difficult and complicated problem should receive its quietus. If the measure is really settlement for all time of the Irish Land Question, it will be the greatest legislative feat ever performed in this House. I do not ask any questions about such familiar subjects as Welsh Disestablishment or Liquor Traffic, but I should like to ask one question with regard to the paragraph dealing with light railways and the agricultural depression. I think the Government have done well to mention this subject in the Queen's Speech, as that depression is now reaching the rank of a great national tragedy, and I do not believe there is any man who knows anything about the state of our agriculture who does not contemplate its future prospects with something approaching absolute dismay. But I confess I should like to know a little more about this plan of light railways Are the Government still of opinion that these railways should be constructed at the expense of the rates? It has been my fortune to have had more to do with light railways in Ireland than any other man in this House, and if those railways have been a success it is because the Government of the day kept inflexibly in view two fundamental principles.

One was that the chance of a light railway paying its expenses—or being, on the other hand, a burden to those who had to do with it—was enormously diminished if that light railway was placed under separate local management and not under the general supervision and management of some great line of railway. You double the staff; you double the expense; you promote jealousy and friction in every direction; and, as it were, from every pore you waste money, of which there is very little to waste, believe me, out of the profits of the railway you construct. That is the first principle. Our second and even more fundamental principle was this, that no local cost should be involved in the construction of the railway; that is to say, that no burden, permanent or otherwise, should be thrown upon the rates of the locality through which the railway passes. I am as desirous as any man in this House to see those parts of the country which are not at present served by railways supplied with the necessary transport accommodation. I agree with the Seconder of the Address when he said that agriculture never was carried on under more hopeless circumstances than in those parts of the country where the producer could not carry his goods to the market. But if this is going to be an excuse for throwing a new burden on the ratepayers of districts already staggering under the load of local taxation, scarcely able at present prices to make agriculture a paying concern at all—if they are, in addition, to be burdened with rates for railways to serve districts that are going out or that have gone out of cultivation, then, I say, that any pretended boon like that suggested in this paragraph will weigh down an already sinking industry and will be a burden and not an assistance to those it is intended to help. I am sure that on that the Government can, without going into the details of their measure, reassure us, and we shall hail with satisfaction any words that fall from them which will convince us that the gift which they propose to give to the farmers and labourers of this country is not a pure and absolute delusion. I do not think it worth while asking any more questions about the details of your legislation, but I cannot sit down without saying something about your legislation as a whole. I wonder at the gravity with which the Mover and Seconder of the Address went patiently through this long list of measures, not one of which, on the authority of its own friends, has the slightest chance of becoming law. These paragraphs in the Queen's Speech dealing with your legislative programme are a farce, and they are known to be a farce by those who propose them. I will not say that this programme is a mere music-hall advertisement, for it is not nearly so amusing; I will not say that it is the announcement of an academic course of discussions, for it is not nearly so instructive. But although it is not like either of these things I will tell the House what it is not like also. It is not like the Agenda Paper of a business assembly. I believe it is the custom—at all events it was when I had a practical connection with these matters—for the gentlemen who have got to move and second the Address to take counsel with the heads of the Government—the Prime Minister in the House of Lords and the Leader of the House in the Commons—as to the line they should take on the various measures announced in the Queen's Speech. What kind of a conversation I should like to know was that which took place on this occasion between the Mover and the Seconder and the Prime Minister and the Leader of the House? We have been vouchsafed by those important gentlemen with a great many announcements during the recess as to what they thought of this very legislation and its prospects of passing. One of the Bills most highly praised by the Seconder of the Address was that which promises to deal with the Liquor Traffic. Upon that subject we have had two pronouncements from the Prime Minister—I mean two statements have been made by him. One is that he does not think so much will come of it if it were to pass as its supporters—meaning, I suppose, the Chancellor of the Exchequer—suppose. The other proposition was that it had not the slightest chance of becoming law, not so much because of the wicked House of Lords or because of an obstructive Opposition, but because of the inherent difficulties of the case. This is what he says :—

> "I do not build such high hopes upon this Bill as some of its supporters. You will never deal with this question in a piecemeal fashion."

I do not quote the whole passage, but by piecemeal fashion he means by this Bill, as is quite evident from the context. He goes on—

> "If you want to grapple with this enormous question, all the force of a great Parliamentary majority, all the time a full Parliamentary Session can give you, will be required."

Have you got the full time of a Parliamentary Session to begin with? This precious measure, this instalment, comes at the end of a list which includes an Irish Land Act, a Disestablishment Bill, and an Evicted Tenants Bill. However rapid may be our decisions on these important questions, they will not leave a full Session to discuss the Local Veto Bill, and I assume, therefore, that one of the conditions mentioned by the Prime Minister for the success of this measure is absent. What is the other condition he mentioned? A great Parliamentary majority. Have you got a great Parliamentary majority? Are you in the way of getting a great Parliamentary majority? And if you have neither got nor expect to get it, then I want to know why we are asked to go through what the Prime Minister himself declares to be nothing more than a legislative farce? So much for the Local Veto Bill. Are you better off with the Welsh Church Bill? The Gentleman chiefly concerned in the Welsh Church Bill is the Home Secretary. I am not sure that I have the quotation, nor do I think perhaps that it is worth while bothering the House with it. But I recollect the substance of it well enough. He gave a perfectly candid statement to his constituents with regard to the length of time which, without obstruction, a Bill like the Welsh Church Bill must necessarily take in going through the House. Then, when he had finished that, he burst out into an eloquent lamentation over the fact that when all this Parliamentary time had been expended upon that measure, you would have done no more than you would do by attempting to raise a crop from the seashore. You would be ploughing the sand of the seashore. Are we called here to plough the sand of the seashore? Is it a worthy policy for the Government to pursue to advise Her Majesty to call Parliament together and to go through all the ancient ceremonial connected with the assembly of the representatives of the people for no other purpose than to do that which they themselves confess can end in nothing but vanity—in the words of the Prime Minister, to waste the time of the House in an absolutely "bootless and fruitless process"? I respected the Mover and Seconder of the Address, and lamented the false position in which they found themselves. They are asked to recommend us to begin this bootless and fruitless process, and it certainly seems to me that a greater step towards the degradation of Parliament never has been taken than that which the Government now take. They call us here not to pass laws, but to further some obscure Party strategical purpose. That is not the use to which, in my judgment, this Imperial Assembly should be placed. You have announced your impotence, your legislative impotence, on every platform in the country. You have shown your sores to lamenting audiences of your followers in Scotland, in England, and in Wales. What is the source of this weakness? You say it is the House of Lords. [*Ministerial Cheers and Laughter.*] Let me tell the hon. Gentleman who assents to that statement that the House of Lords could not, if it would, resist the will of the people of this country. And if the House of Lords shall succeed in resisting your will, it is because you do not represent the will of the people. I remember, unless my memory altogether deceives me, that triennial Parliaments were part of the Newcastle Programme. I could imagine the Government saying that a Triennial Bill is not yet passed, and that, if a Government had reason to believe that it has the people of the country behind it, there is no reason why it should give up the reins of Office until this Triennial legislation should actually be passed into law. I assume, therefore, that the Government, in giving themselves a lease of life longer than they think appropriate for any other Government, have some ground for supposing that they, above other Governments, are blessed with the rising force of popular passion behind them. They may have some knowledge not vouchsafed to humbler mortals with regard to the feelings of the country. I never myself venture to prophesy on these questions, for I frankly admit that the signs of popular favour and disfavour are not always easy to read, and may sometimes be mistaken. But I do not think a man could get up on either side of the House and say, that if it be the proper Constitution of this country that any Government not sure, after three years of Office, that it has the people of the country behind it, ought to dissolve, that duty is laid upon this Government above every other Government of which we know in recent times. Never has a Government attempted to pass such revolutionary measures upon so small a capital. They will never be able, even if they last the whole term of their possible career, to pass measures such as they now propose to this House, with no more majority than the small majority they have at present, and the secret of that impotence, which they are the first and loudest to proclaim, is not that there is a House of Lords in political disagreement with them, but that they have not in the House of Commons at the present time that power behind them which is required if measures of this kind are to have the smallest chance of passing. From this House there is but one appeal, to the source of all political strength in this country, and that appeal they are unwilling or afraid to make. In my opinion, the new departure which the Government have chosen to make with regard to legislation, this deliberately announced intention to bring forward measures which they know cannot pass—to be brought forward, I suppose, for some purpose of self-advertisement—this departure, I say, is so grave an attack upon the functions of this House that before this Debate comes to a conclusion I trust some Member of authority will move an Amendment which will give us an opportunity of recording our judgment upon the subject.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (SIR W. HARCOURT, Derby): My first task, which is a most agreeable one, is to thank my hon. Friends the Mover and Seconder of the Address for the able manner in which they have discharged their duties. Their speeches were characterised by great clearness and, on the whole, great moderation. Then, through the greater part of the observations of the right hon. Gentleman, I was going myself to pay him the compliment of saying that his speech was most moderate; but, like the Irishman of whom one has heard, he thought it necessary to keep a gallop for the end against his adversary, and that part of his speech was indeed of a much more lively character. I am glad that the Seconder of the Address referred to the loss this House has sustained in the death of Lord R. Churchill. Those are sentiments with which we on these Benches desire to associate ourselves. We feel that in the loss of Lord R. Churchill this House misses one of its principal ornaments. There was something original in his character; there was an independence in his ideas; there was a brightness and a force in his language which attracted to him those by whom he was most strongly opposed. Like the right hon. Member, I speak of him as a personal friend of many years' standing, as well as a political adversary, and I feel sure that I interpret aright the sentiments of gentlemen on this side of the House when I say that we are saddened by the thought that we shall see him amongst us no more. There is another topic of a melancholy character which was referred to with great justice and wisdom by my two hon. Friends, and that is the death of the late Emperor of Russia, which I regard as a great calamity to the world. I am glad they referred to it, because I am quite sure that the expression by the House of Commons of its sympathy in these events greatly contributes to the friendship and peace of nations. The late Tsar rendered inestimable service to the great cause of peace throughout the world. There have been times, no doubt, when it was thought that Russia was a disturbing element in Europe. That certainly was not the case during the reign of the late Emperor. His lofty character, his determined will, and his enlightened love of peace were among the chief guarantees for that gretest of all blessings to mankind, and it is in that capacity that I think that we are specially called upon to do honour to his memory. Happily, this great quality which he possessed, this virtue which was so conspicuous in his reign, has been inherited by and has descended to his successor, and we sincerely trust that the happy dawn of an auspicious reign will continue the blessings of peace to mankind. To me it is a melancholy reflection that while we confidently believe, and I think I may say I know, that every Ruler in Europe and every Government in Europe ardently and earnestly desire peace, we should be called upon to be armed to the teeth as if we were in the presence of instant and universal war. That is not the doing of the Rulers of Nations; it is not the doing of Governments. I was much struck by a declaration made in the autumn of last year by Count Kalnoky, the able Minister of Austria, who said—

> "It is not to us that you should come if you want disarmament, but you should go to those mischievous and irresponsible persons who take upon themselves day after day and month after month to sow dissension and jealously, and to preach hatred amongst the nations of the world."

It is from this that arises that spirit of alarm which makes it necessary, as I say, that we should assume the attitude that all the nations have been apparently compelled to take up. I think these are matters upon which it is well that we should reflect. It is utterly untrue, I believe, that there is at this moment a single Government in Europe that is contemplating or desiring war. That is a great blessing; and when a great monarch like the late Emperor of Russia puts himself forward as one of the greatest advocates of peace, it is but right that we, who all profess to be friends of peace, should render a tribute to his memory. With reference to foreign policy, I need say no more. I thought, however, the observations made by the right hon. Gentleman opposite were very weighty and just, and I pay the same tribute to the present Opposition that he has rendered to the late Opposition—namely, that we never sought in foreign affairs the means for fractious attacks upon the Administration. It is that spirit which is a great guarantee of peace, because a Government may be driven by fractious operations of that kind into a position in which the peace of the world is endangered. The right hon. Gentleman has challenged me on the subject of the Navy, and asks why it was not mentioned in the Speech. It was mentioned last year because the Government were about to make large and new proposals; but in the present year they are carrying out those proposals loyally and fully, and we therefore thought it unnecessary to make any further statement on the subject. Then the right hon. Gentleman touched, with caution and discretion, I thought, on the question of the condition of Ireland. He said that the fact that Ireland exhibited a lower rate of crime than had ever been recorded before was only the natural consequence of the policy which he represents. [MR. BALFOUR made a gesture of dissent.] I am not going to enter into any dispute at the present time—I daresay we shall hear a good deal abont this subject before we have done—but we on this side of the House hold different views as to the government of Ireland from those of the right hon. Gentleman. We believe that the policy which we have declared, and to which we adhere, is the real cause of the tranquility of Ireland, and that the people of that country now entertain hope, and that they place confidence in the pledges of the Liberal Party. We maintain the establishment of Home Rule as a primary policy. Did you suppose we were going to recede from it? Have we ever shown any signs of receding? We believe that a wise system of self-government is the only permanent basis upon which a reconciliation of the ancient feuds between England and Ireland can be in the end effected. That is our belief; that is the ground of our policy, and we have pursued and shall continue to pursue that great aim. We shall persist in it. Whilst maintaining the necessary safeguards for the unity of the Empire, we shall labour to carry into effect a plan which shall be satisfactory to the Irish people and the Irish Representatives. [*Opposition laughter.*] Gentlemen opposite cheer ironically. Well, I have been asked to speak plainly, and I hope I have done so. With reference to Irish land legislation, the right hon. Gentleman asks whether there is to be one Bill or two Bills. All I can say at present is that we reserve our discretion in the matter. Then the right hon. Gentleman next referred, in language I do not think too strong, to the deplorable condition of the agricultural interest; but, Sir, I think that every man will feel that it was impossible that we should come forward with a series of remedies for that agricultural depression, when there is sitting a most able and competent Commission. [*Opposition cries of* "Oh!"] Do you say it is not competent? I do not see the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford here. I do not know why you should say that Commission is not competent. It has upon it a number of gentlemen as distinguished and as capable of forming an opinion upon that subject as any in the country. We have received no recommendations from them as yet. I observed that the Duke of Devonshire the other day referred to the Commission, but did not give any idea which he himself entertained of what was to be done in the matter. He pointed out, I thought, with that great common-sense which always distinguishes that Statesman, that it was absolutely necessary that we should await the recommendations of that Commission. Then the right hon. Gentleman asks me some questions about light railways. There again I cannot go into financial reasons without anticipating what has before long to be stated by my right hon. Friend near me, and I should be embarrassing this debate by a side issue which I think is not desirable. The right hon. Gentleman then proceeded to refer to some of the main Bills in the Queen's Speech, and he said: "You know there is not the smallest chance of any of them passing into law." That is his position.

MR. BALFOUR: No. Your position.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Yes, that may be, but why do we think, and why does the right hon. Gentleman think, that none of these measures will pass into law? There is a Bill in which I have more confidence than he has, the Local Veto Bill, because when it comes to the issue I venture to say that the right hon. Gentleman will find that friends of that Bill sit, not only on this side of the House, but on that side. Therefore the words of the right hon. Gentleman upon that subject do not alarm me. But when he was dealing with that Bill he said—"Oh, it is coming after a lot of other Bills, and therefore there is no chance for it." That is taking credit to himself for those arts of procrastination in which the right hon. Gentleman and his friends are unquestionably past-masters. But he came to another Bill, which he assumed was going to be the first Bill. Does he think, does he mean to say that that Bill will not pass the House of Commons? "No," he said, "not at all." That was not the view he took. He referred to a conversation he had with the Mover and Seconder of the Bill. I have not the same authority the right hon. Gentleman has, and which he exercises so freely, of knowing beforehand all the Bills the House of Lords is going to throw out.

MR. BALFOUR: Will the right hon. Gentleman allow me to interrupt him? I did not make one single prophecy of my own in the whole course of my speech. I relied entirely upon statements by Members of the Government, and principally the Prime Minister.

SIR W. HARCOURT: If the right hon. Gentleman referred to my statements, I have never said that none of these Bills will pass. He has asked my opinion, and my opinion is that most of these Bills will pass. He knows best whether he has ascertained and has authority for stating that if the Local Veto Bill passes the House of Commons, the House of Lords will throw it out. If that is so, he knows more about it than I do. But if the House of Lords does take that course, the view of the country will be taken upon it. Now, Sir, the right hon. Gentleman, as I have said, is in this position with regard to the House of Lords—that he can always fulfil his own prophecy, which is a very strong position for a prophet to occupy. He says, on the Welsh Bill, that we are ploughing the sand. [*Opposition cries of* "Asquith?"] Yes, I know; but why are we ploughing the sand? On this measure and on others, what is the real position the right hon. Gentleman takes his stand upon? It is this—that no Government ought to produce any measure which it does not know beforehand will be passed by the House of Lords. He says—and let the House mark this—

> "If you introduce a Bill which you know beforehand never can be passed into law, then you are ploughing the sand, and you are degrading the House of Commons by introducing Bills which the House of Lords will not condescend to pass."

I wonder what would be the degradation

of the House of Commons, what would be the humiliation of this place if we accepted the principle of the right hon. Gentleman that before we lay a Bill—a Bill which we conceive to be just in itself, which we consider would be of advantage to the people of the country—we should say, "Will the House of Lords pass it?" That is the ploughing the sand with which the right hon. Gentleman taunts us. I was glad, at all events, to find that the right hon. Gentleman is a convert to triennial Parliaments. He says that Parliament ought to be dissolved at once; but I would submit to his consideration that a triennial Parliament rather assumes three Sessions, and this is the third Session of this Parliament. What he is in favour of apparently is biennial Parliaments. Why, on the principle of triennial Parliaments, he should attack us for endeavouring to carry out the legislation we think of advantage to the country in the third Session of the present Parliament I am utterly at a loss to understand. We know very well that to-night we are only on the preliminaries. The right hon. Gentleman is going to have an Amendment. He is quite right to have an Amendment. I was much afraid, in listening to his speech, that it was a gun which was filled up to the muzzle with powder, but in which there was no shot. At least, he has informed the House that he is going to have an Amendment, and we await, with as much curiosity as he awaits our revelations, his revelations upon that Amendment. I do not know that I ought to detain the House any longer. With most of these measures the House is familiar enough. They have been before the House and the country often, and will be before the House and the country until they are passed into law at the instance of the Liberal Party. Why are we to be reproached because these measures have been before the House and the country so long? If you are strong enough in the House of Commons to get rid of us, you will not get rid of these measures hereafter; and if you intend, with your permanent majority in the House of Lords, to resist the passing of measures of this character, if you say "You lay before the country a miscellaneous programme," I would point out that the country has pronounced in favour of that programme. These are the measures which at the last election enabled us to turn your majority of 100 into a minority of 40. That was a pretty significant indication of the opinion of the country. As long as this Government, having been placed in power by a majority in the country even larger than in the House of Commons, remains in power, it is bound to pursue the measures to which it has pledged itself before the country, and we intend to do so until the House of Commons shall have pronounced condemnation upon us.

*MR. J. McCARTHY (Longford, N.): Before dealing with the questions which are of so much interest to my friends and myself, I should like to join in the sympathy expressed by every one who has spoken of the death of Lord Randolph Churchill. I have had many opportunities of knowing Lord Randolph Churchill in this House, and I have had many chances of forming a knowledge of him outside the House. My friends and I can remember many sharp engagements in which we fought side by side with Lord Randolph Churchill, and we always found him a gallant knight. We knew, too, that he had much sympathy with our country, and we all feel that in him the country has lost a friend. Now, Sir, I wish to say a few words in reference to the question which naturally interests us most, I mean the question of Ireland, and the references to Ireland in the gracious Speech from the Throne. My friends and I are much gratified by the information given to the House in that Speech as to the diminution of crime, not only agricultural crime, but crime of all kinds, in Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition seemed in some way to wish to insinuate that it was his own particular policy which had caused this diminution of crime. I do not think history will exactly bear that out. I think the Chancellor of the Exchequer explained very fairly and very justly that it is to the fact that Ireland feels that she has such strong friends in this country, and that she has hope in the English democracy, that the quietude and patience of the people of Ireland is to be attributed. We might have expected we should be told that, on some occasion at the earliest possible moment, a Bill would be introduced to repeal the Coercion Act. That, I believe, would be a measure which would not absorb much time of the House; and it would even find some sympathy, I venture to say, among the members on those (the Opposition) benches. I hope it is not too late now for the Government to turn their attention to that measure, whereby they would give another guarantee to Ireland that the reign of coercion and terror is over. I will go further and ask the Government whether the time has not come for a complete amnesty. I think that every possible reason would support the wisdom of the course I suggest. It would be taken in Ireland, and all over the world where there are Irishmen, as another proof of the generous purposes of the Government — of their desire to efface the memory of past struggles, and to allow Ireland to enter upon a new era, unembittered by recollections of political conflict. I will not go into arguments which have been adduced many times before, and may have to be adduced again; but I say there are many reasons for believing that the men now in prison were unfairly convicted. I would strongly appeal to the Government to make their policy still more welcome by adopting the suggestion I would make. The Government have told us we are going to have a Tenants Bill; but I think also that something ought to be done at once for the labourers of Ireland. Their case has been brought before the House over and over again, and yet nothing has been done for them. We look to the Government in hope and confidence to make a strenuous effort to improve the condition of these men. The Leader of the Opposition referred to the fact that Irish land legislation was going on long before the opening of his own career. I can remember Irish land measures in this House as far back as the days of Mr. Sharman Crawford. Why has it been so? Simply and solely because the landlord party in this House and the landlord party in the other House voted against every measure brought in for the relief of Irish Tenants, resisted all such proposals step by step, fought over them as long as they could, and thus this question has come down from generation to generation, and is not yet closed. I sincerely hope that before long the question will have passed out of the region of legislation into that of history. I would remind the Government that famine is creeping over many parts of Ireland. We hear of agricultural depression here in this country, but let me remind the Government and the House that what is called depression in England means starvation in Ireland. There are numbers of reasons to account for it. There are the poverty of our country and the fact that its resources are undeveloped. It may also be said that in Ireland there is not that generous spirit displayed by landlords towards tenants that we find in England. All these are considerations of the most pressing urgency. Famine is creeping over the land, and there are many ways in which the Government may act promptly and generously to avert the evils which threaten the country. As regards land and other legislation, they have the confidence of the Irish people; and that gives a new chance to the Government. Ireland is absolutely at peace; it is full of faith in what can be done by this Government. I believe that no administration in this country ever had so great a chance of carrying measures to promote peace and contentment in Ireland.

Mr. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said it was remarkable, considering the the strong language that had been used about the House of Lords by the Prime Minister and others, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not told them what was to be done with reference to that House; but the omission only showed that the main object of the Session was to be to maintain the majority of the Government and to keep them in office. In his speech at Cardiff the Prime Minister mentioned three or four measures; but it was remarkable that he forgot all about the Irish Land Bill, which now took the first place in the Queen's Speech. It could only be inferred that after the speech at Cardiff, further pressure was put upon him by his Irish allies and supporters. It was, further, curious to observe the arrangement adopted that evening, from which it appeared that the first measure to be brought in would be the Welsh Church Bill. It was quite clear that there was a good deal of friction between the Welsh Party and the Irish Party. The Government had to drive the two horses abreast and they had great difficulty in doing so because of the rivalry between them; and it was about as much as the Government could manage to keep these two sections of their followers quiescent and to secure their support from day to day. It would be seen whether the Irish Party would be satisfied with this arrangement and whether the farce of last Session would be continued this with the result of the Government managing by the skin of its teeth to keep its majority and its place on the Treasury Bench. With regard to the Local Veto he had to put several questions last Session, and he always got the same answer; and no doubt it would be the same this Session. The late Prime Minister had said that a Local Veto Bill was little less than an imposture, and the Government were driven to bringing it forward simply to keep their followers together. As the Seconder of the Address said, it was a half-way house for securing the votes of the people; it was brought in with no other purpose than to keep faith with a certain section of the followers of the Government. This was an absolute farce, and the Temperance Party must feel that they were being made tools of by the Government. As a Londoner he must protest very much against the action of the Home Secretary in one matter connected with the Government of London, namely, the management of the business connected with the payment of the Judge of the County of London Sessions. It seemed to him to be a most unworthy position the Home Secretary had taken up. Although during the last three years he had refused his assent to the salary of the Judge, he had now agreed, at the dictation of the County Council, to recommend a certain salary, acknowledging that the salary had not been satisfactory. The proper and equitable management of the Judicial Bench in London was of the highest importance; and for a Judge to be placed under the London County Council, and to be tabooed by the Council because he had not always acted as they wished, was a scandal to the name of justice, and ought to be put an end to without further delay. On the Conservative side they must protest against the farce of "One Man One Vote." It was proposed by a Government which knew perfectly well that it was only kept in Office by the unfair distribution of political power throughout the United Kingdom. Last year some of the measures of the Government had to be got through by a majority of 10, yet, as a fact, England, "the predominant partner," was under-represented by no less than 20 votes, and if we had anything like a fair distribution of political power throughout the kingdom the present Government could not exist. They must protest against any alteration in the system of voting until the anomaly he had referred to was done away with, and each person in the United Kingdom represented, as far as possible, the same political power. As to the Payment of Members, he hoped it would be resisted to the utmost. To throw the cost on the rates would be the most unpopular thing the Government could propose. Referring to the large number of measures which he said were "crammed" into the Queen's Speech, the hon. Member remarked that Lord Rosebery had said in one of his recent speeches that they were put there as "marks of sincerity and pledges of honesty." He was convinced of this—that they were inserted in the Queen's Speech not with any idea of passing them, but solely that the Government might keep the various sections of their followers together. With regard to the agitation against the House of Lords, Lord Rosebery was unable to arouse any enthusiasm on the subject, and every by-election showed that the country was more keen to return Conservatives than those who would abolish the House of Lords. Lord Rosebery possessed many advantages by being a Member of the House of Lords; in fact, he was the spoiled child of that House, yet he wish to abolish it. If he had not been a Peer he would never have been Prime Minister. The Chancellor of the Exchequer might have rocked him in his cradle before he thought of politics. Lord Rosebery would not have won the Derby, or been the millionaire he was, or Chairman of the London County Council, if he had not been a Peer. Yet he wished to do away with the House of Lords. The whole thing was a farce and a sham. Lord Rosebery was picked out for the very positon he held because he was a Peer; he was assisted by the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere), who ran *Truth* on the scandal of the aristocracy, but for whose existence the paper could not go on. Yet these were the men who wanted to do away with the House of Lords. The fact was, the present Government were in extreme difficulties. They knew that half-a-dozen votes would throw them out. They were anxious to find something the House of Lords would throw out, and in which they thought the country would resent their doing so. When the Home Rule Bill was thrown out by an enormous majority the country did not resent it; in fact, was relieved by its being thrown out. One of the prominent supporters of the Government (Mr. McEwan) had recently admitted that the proposal of Home Rule was a failure and a delusion. They knew the Government did not intend to introduce it again, and their supporters would unite in anything to prevent their doing so. The Government Finance Measure of last Session was a most complicated one, and it occupied a considerable time in discussion, although the supporters of Her Majesty's Government, whether Irish, or Teetotallers, or Disestablishers, took no part in that discussion. The Government, not satisfied with having wasted so much valuable time, had made an attack upon the House of Lords. They found, however, that the attack would not answer, because the country wished to have a House of Lords; and because some of their supporters wished to become Lords themselves. The Government, in these circumstances, had thought it better not to mention the House of Lords in the Speech, and they had been compelled to content themselves by putting into it a few stale, humdrum measures, which they had no real hope of passing into law. The longer the present Government remained in Office the larger would be the majority against them at the next General Election, and therefore, in one view of the case, he should be sorry to see an immediate Dissolution. On the other hand, however, he objected to government by shams, and therefore he should rejoice to see the present Ministry turned out of Office. There were many pressing social matters which the Government ought to have given more prominence to in the Speech—such, for instance, as the condition of Agriculture and of Labour. Unless we could maintain the trade and commerce of the country, nothing that Parliament could do would preserve our population from poverty and misery. Instead of bringing in a number of sham measures, the Government ought to have dealt with those great subjects, and have done their best to extend our manufactures and our output, and to widen the fields for English enterprise. The Government had run away from their pledges to bring in a measure of Home Rule, and the result would be that they would be brought face to face with their Irish supporters, and they would go out of Office with the general feeling that the Ministry had existed not for the good of the country, but of themselves alone.

*SIR A. K. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) rose to say a few words on the important subject of conciliation in trade disputes, which had been only faintly referred to in the Queen's Speech, and which could not be neglected without the most disastrous results to our manufactures and to the general community. It was our strikes and lock-outs which had been a principal cause of the alleged depression in trade, and which had added to the already heavy disadvantages under which we suffered in our competition with foreign countries. The strikes in the coal trade and in the docks at Hull had been the cause of suffering, and even of death, to large numbers of the population of that town, and they might have easily been prevented by some Board of Conciliation. The trade disputes in the winter of last year had far outnumbered those which had occurred in the previous year. Doubtless the Government had done something in a spasmodic way to put an end to those disputes, but more general action was necessary. A well-drawn measure dealing with the subject would receive the almost universal assent of the Members of both Houses of Parliament, who entertained no great divergence of opinion as to the general principles upon which such a measure should be based. Such a Bill should be voluntary in its character; should provide for an equal representation on the Board of the employers and employed; and should involve meditation rather than Arbitration; while it should not presume to fix the rate of wages in the future. A Bill of that kind, which had been prepared by the London Chamber of Commerce, had actually passed the other House of Parliament with the support of the present Ministry. The experience furnished by foreign nations—for instance, that of the *Conseils des prudhommes* in France, which had settled 60,000 labour disputes last year — was entirely favourable to his proposal. He could assure the Government that the country felt most deeply on this question, and that the Trade Unions heartily supported the proposal. If the Government took up this subject they would effect a great social reform, and they might rely upon the entire support of the Opposition in the matter. He was glad that the Government had called a conference to discuss the subject of Light Railways, which would have the effect of bringing the producer and the consumer of agricultural produce into immediate contact, The localities would doubtless take a great interest in these light railways, and would recognize in them an assistance to agriculture. It was, however, only by a fuller introduction of the collective system and newer methods of culture that a remedy for agricultural depression was to be found. The light railways, if properly carried out, might be the means of doing much for the development of the country, and he wished to express his obligation to the President of the Board of Trade for this new departure. He hoped that they might look for a promise of an early measure on the subject of Deep Sea Fisheries, a question which touched the food and diet of the people, which, probably, had an ultimate bearing on the manning of our Navy, and for which Foreign Nations had legislated with advantage to themselves. He hoped that the work of the Sea Fisheries' Committee of which he was a member would not be lost, but would be embodied in legislation, which would prove useful. He regretted the absence from the Queen's Speech of any Registration Bill. This was a subject which could not too often be repeated until it passed, and the present state of our Electoral Laws was disfranchising instead of enfranchising. The insertion of a Registration Bill, Session after Session, was, therefore, a matter of great urgency. There need be no loss of legislative labours if the House only attended to its own procedure and did not trouble itself so much about the other House, which, at any rate, did its business in an excellent manner. The procedure of the House of Commons should be simplified and rendered more in accordance with modern thought and practice, *e.g.*, provision should be made for carrying measures over from Session to Session so as to avoid the scandal of throwing away the work of a whole Session. He hoped they would have the advantage of the presence of the Leader of the House on the next occasion when this matter was brought forward. If the two Front Benches meant business—and he sometimes doubted whether they did—there need no longer be the present records of wasted work.

MR. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN (Kent, Faversham) said, that he rose to express his profound surprise at the way in which the agricultural interest had been treated in the Queen's Speech. In the paragraph referring to this subject he could find no trace of any real intention to bring forward any measure of relief in mitigation of the distress now prevailing in the agricultural community, and, so far as he was able to judge the whole course of action of the Radical Party was adverse, inimical, and antagonistic to the agricultural interests. Yet whenever, as members or candidates, Radicals went before the agricultural constituencies they then discovered that it was the most important of our industries, and then it was that they promised the poor deluded voters all kinds of things. When they were elected there was not, however, one fad to which they would not postpone this greatest of all interests. The result of the Parish Councils Act had been, as he had predicted, to create ill-blood and dissension where none had previously existed; it had done no good to the labourers, who, moreover, did not want it; but it had had the effect of increasing the rates. Both parties were doubtless responsible for this. But there was another measure far worse for the agricultural interests than the Local Government Act or the Parish Councils Act, and that was the most cruel and unjust Budget of last year. It was a bad day for the agricultural labourer when that Act became law. All the smaller fads and schemes put forward scarcely touched the fringe of agricultural depression; and until and unless a Statesman should arise from either Party who would make a thorough alteration in our out-of-date fiscal system, and would make this his chief aim and object, there would be no real relief from the depression and ruin which now rested on our commerce and our agriculture.

*SIR J. LUBBOCK (London University) remarked that the country had been looking forward with great interest to the Queen's Speech. There was much in it which was remarkable, but the omissions were even more remarkable than the substance. There was nothing about Home Rule for Ireland; and although the Government had been denouncing the other House on platforms all over the country, there was nothing about the House of Lords. The Chancellor of the Exchequer expressed much confidence that the measures mentioned in the Speech would pass the House of Commons, and said that if they were lost it would be in the House of Lords. But the Prime Minister gave a very different reason why they should fail when he said that the Government was like

> "A great piece of ordnance muzzled with balls, heavy and destructive in their character, but with a perfectly insufficient charge behind them to launch at the enemy."

That seemed a very good description of some of the proposals of the Government. They were cumbrous. If they were successfully got off they would be very destructive to the country; but, fortunately, there was not sufficient powder behind them. He regretted that subjects calculated to relieve the present depression received so little consideration from Government. For instance, the depression in trade was greatly due to the disputes between Capital and Labour, most of which were perfectly unnecessary, as they arose from misunderstandings, which, if properly dealt with, could be prevented. The Government had a Bill on the subject, but he could not help thinking it rather ominous that this Bill was not going to be introduced on Thursday. Last year he had the honour of introducing a Bill dealing with the same subject on behalf of the Chambers of Commerce and the great London Trades Unions? Her Majesty's Government said that they did not object to the Bill, but whenever it was brought on they blocked it. The Chambers of Commerce then introduced it into the other House, and it was passed there with general consent. If there were some cases in which good Bills passed that House, and were lost elsewhere, on the other hand there were cases, andthis was one, where useful measures passed in the other House had been lost in the House of Commons. He urged the Government to attempt to press the matter on, and to bring it on at a time when it would be properly discussed in that House. He very greatly regretted that no mention was made by the Government of any measure dealing with the excessively long hours of labour in shops. There was no class of the community who worked so long as small shopkeepers and their assistants, and that House had already unanimously passed a strongly-worded Resolution on that subject in March 1893. Her Majesty's Government apparently were not going to do anything to give effect to that Resolution. He had always understood that when a Resolution of this character was passed the Government were bound to give effect to it; and he deeply regretted that the Government should entirely ignore this great and grievous evil.

*SIR F. S. POWELL (Wigan), said he represented a district which, perhaps more than any other, suffered during the great dispute in the coal trade in 1892, and the sorrows arising from that unhappy condition of affairs were not yet abated. There was no doubt the depression and grief in that district would continue for a considerable period, and he felt that the Government were taking a heavy responsibility if they did not in the course of this Session take some effectual steps to promote a solution of these industrial difficulties. Both employers and employed suffered from these troubles, and it was to the interests of all that these disputes should cease. There was one omission from the Queen's Speech to which he would refer, and that was in regard to the pollution of rivers. They had passed an Act two or three years ago dealing with the Mersey and Irwell, and the difficulties arising in Lancashire and part of Cheshire which, at that time, were of a gigantic character. The effect of that legislation had been that in many parts of Lancashire the evils were greatly diminished, and he hoped that in the course of a very few years all those difficulties would have disappeared. The same observation applied to the West Riding of Yorkshire, and so recently as last Session a private Act was passed dealing with that large industrial district, the Mersey and Irwell Act being adopted with some modifications. In that case there had been activity of public opinion in favour of the new law. He felt thoroughly convinced that it was the duty of Parliament to take advantage of the great success of this experiment, and by general legislation to give to the whole of the country the advantages which local legislation had conferred on Lancashire and Yorkshire. If the Government did not themselves initiate legislation, he hoped they would support the initiation of private Members. He should have the honour in a few hours to ask the House, for the third time, to permit him to introduce a Bill for the prevention of the pollution of rivers throughout the country; and he hoped that, even if it was not thought right that this Bill should become law in the course of the present Session, the question might at least be thoroughly investigated by means of a Committee, and that it might afterwards be dealt with in a widely-reaching statute. He desired to acknowledge the action of the Local Government Board in regard to the Circular which they had recently sent to the Boards of Guardians throughout the country; but while adequate relief was given to real poverty, he hoped that sturdy vagrants would not be collected together into one centre by a too liberal administration of the law.

*MR. R. G. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.) expressed his satisfaction at the statement in the Address relating to foreign affairs, and also at the announcement that in Ireland, whatever be the reason, offences of all kinds had reached a low level. They were told that this was Her Majesty's Gracious Speech from the Throne; but they all knew that the Speech was in reality prepared or advised by the Government. He had never before seen a Speech which proposed so many Constitutional changes as this one. He would not go through all the proposals in the Speech. He should confine himself to one—it was a very important matter, and he thought it ought to have a whole Session devoted to itself; he referred to the paragraph which dealt with the Church in Wales. They had before them last Session a Bill which dealt with this question, and they had a right to ask—Why should this question be brought on again in this particular Session? Why should the subject be pressed upon the country at the present time? It seemed to him that the reason was this: the supporters of the Bill saw that unless this question were solved very quickly it would never be solved at all according to their views. The Bill was urged forward on the ground of what was called "religious liberty." He could not agree with that, for, so far as he was able to understand, they had absolute religious liberty already. The proposal of the Government went a step farther: it went as far as spoliation of the Church in Wales. He did not see how the Bill could be defended on the principle of religious liberty. He had no idea of religious liberty unconnected with honesty and justice. He asked—Why was this attack on the Church to be made at the present time? The opponents of the Church knew that it was increasing in strength, and that unless this attack were made now there would be no chance of success. What said the late Prime Minister of this part of the Church as late as 1891?

> "The Established Church in Wales is an advancing Church, a living Church, and I hope very distinctly a living Church rising from elevation to elevation."

Contrast these words with the vitriolic bitterness with which the hon. Member for the Carnarvon district and his friends refer to the Church in Wales, either in this House or in the country, when he or they call it an Alien Church, and its bishops and other ministers of its religion, aliens and spies. Notwithstanding these angry chidings, its foundations remain unshaken. Its clergy continue doing their useful work, teaching the doctrines of brotherly love, and he would venture to say if Churchmen do their duty they had power to prevent the success of this movement; and he sincerely hoped that their defence of the Church will be conducted in a manner more worthy of the Christian name than the attacks. They should be told by the Government and their friends that there is some resemblance in the case of the Church in Wales and the Irish Church. It is at best but a very slight one. In the case of the Irish Church, the statistics of an undoubted character proved that its followers were only one-tenth of the population. Who can give accurate figures respecting the proportion of Churchmen and Nonconformists in Wales, and whose fault is it that they are unattainable? Not Churchmen and their friends in this House assuredly. When the Census of 1890--1 was to be taken we asked for a religious Census in England and Wales, as there was one in Ireland. This was stoutly opposed by the Liberationists in this House and outside, and they succeeded in preventing that Census being taken. They might well ask themselves why. If their case had been a strong one, if the Census had been likely to prove in their favour; if, in fact, they had not known that it would prove the Church in Wales to be a much stronger and more numerous body than they had given out, they would have had it fast enough. They prefer sham enumerations, bogus returns, with notices sent out to the Nonconformist congregations and a whip sent out to them to muster in strength, and the Churchmen taken in the usual numbers, with enumerators duly appointed by the leading members of Political Dissenting organisations; these valuable returns being forsooth collected by, in some instances, children of the age of 9 or 10 years. And it is on such returns, and on such absolutely unreliable *ex parte* statistics, this House is to be asked to legislate. What said the Member for Midlothian, on this subject?—

> "We are encountered at the threshold of the question by the old statistical controversy, with regard to which we seem to have been thus far rather too much in the condition of men who are determined to keep themselves in the dark."

And yet after this speech his supporters in this House decline to allow the clear light of day to burn on this important point in the controversy, and why, may we ask? We may almost affirm they hesitate to let the truth be known; and now I would like to furnish the House with a few reliable statistics. The number of Sunday school scholars in the diocese of St. David's has advanced from 28,763 in 1880 to 32,923 in 1889. The number confirmed for the triennial period ending December 1st, 1876, numbered 4,352, and for the period ending 1888, 8,545; that is to say, doubled. The number of communicants has risen from 26,589 to 39,401 in the same period, an increase of 50 per cent. Now, for a moment, let him refer to Burial statistics. When the right hon. Gentleman, the Member for East Denbighshire, brought in his measure, he said it would affect and remove a great grievance from 600,000 of the population of Wales. Now, if only half of what he said were true about his Burials Act the Nonconformists would have eagerly seized the relief given by its provisions. Well, what are the facts since the passing of that Act? In 266 parishes in North Wales, 1,440 funerals have been celebrated under the provisions of that Act by the Nonconformist ministers, while 20,298 have been celebrated according to the rites of the Established Church; and it is said that there have been numerous cases in which excessive pressure has been put on Nonconformists to adopt the provisions of this Act in the burial of their dead, and such pressure has been stubbornly resisted. Hon. Members opposite would try to set up the doctrine of a separate Church for England and Wales. That argument is a fallacious one, and they might as well attempt to set up the doctrine that the Church of the Northern Province of York was dissimilar from that of Canterbury. On that do we want further evidence, than that from the right hon. Gentleman, the Member for Midlothian himself, who said—

> "There is a complete ecclesiastical, constitutional, legal, and, I may add for every practical purpose, historical identity between the Church in Wales and the rest of the Church."

So, when we find that in the Queen's Speech there is a clause to bring in a measure to disestablish the Church in Wales, we must be aware it really means merely the stepping stone to an attack on the Church in England.

> "The operation of disestablishing the Church of Wales from the Church of England will not be an easy one. He suspected that it will be found that it is tied and knotted, and tangled, I might also say, in such a mass of legal bonds and meshes with the general body of the Church, that it would be a very formidable matter indeed to accomplish this untying process."

These are the words of the right hon. Member for Midlothian, not his. They may have been said a few years ago, but time does not render the task more easy, rather more difficult, and this "formidable" measure, this complicated "untying process" is only one of very numerous measures the Government propose with a light heart to carry through this House this Session.—No. This question, if it was ever seriously attempted, would occupy the time of a whole Session to itself, and it is only trifling with the patience of this House. To quote again the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian's words respecting the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales—

> "Only go up to the walls and gate, and look at the way the stone is built upon stone, on the way in which the foundations have been dug, and the way they go down into the earth, and consider by what tools, what artillery, you can bring the fabric to the ground."

We know the way they will try, not by the gallant rush of a storming party to the breach, but by the underground work of the sapper—the false statistics, and the tongue of slander against the Ministers of Religion, and turning every Nonconformist chapel in the Principality into a sort of Radical Candidates' Committee Room. When one reads this paragraph in the Address from the Throne, relative to the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales, we should, ere we accept it, even as a mere formality, recollect what it means. We are asked to disestablish a part of the Church of England. A Church established in this country to give religious instruction to all, rich and poor alike, not only in large centres, but in the smallest hamlet. It is, he maintained, at once the oldest and the purest form of State Socialism. The poor man's church we are asked to commence to attempt to destroy. This House, with all its power, even if it became as they wished, the omnipotent and sole Estate of the Realm, could never destroy it. But why in this age of Socialism in all forms—in your Free Education Acts, in your Poor Laws, your Free Libraries, your roads and bridges free from toll or impost to the traveller or the wayfarer—why should you wish to put back the hands of the clock regarding religion, and make that alone on the voluntary system, which means religion will alone be within the reach of the well-to-do. It is not the time on the Address to refer to the causes of Nonconformity in Wales by non-resident English Bishops and clergy having been appointed during the early Hanoverian reigns; suffice to say that is not the case now. The Church in Wales, equally with the Church in England, has aroused from her partial lethargy of the last century, and is a living force for active good in the country. The Bill of last Session was not only to disestablish the Church, but to despoil it, and he would warn Nonconformists in this House and in the country, that when spoliation once commenced it would not end with the funds of the Church, whether held by tithes or otherwise. Gifts and grants given by Nonconformists in the past, and now held by the various Nonconformists' by trust deeds authorised by Act of Parliament, might be liable to be inquired into and diverted to secular purposes. But knowing, as he did, the condition of the agricultural interest of the country at present, he said that if they leave the Church pennyless, and it had to be supported by the voluntary efforts of the congregations, if they diverted the use of the Tithes from religious purposes, they should not fritter it away on secular purposes, technical institutes, and the like, but restore it to the land by abolishing the Tithe charge. But in reality the payments to a religious body spread throughout the land, whose duty it was to inculcate religion and morality amongst the people, was, to put it on no higher ground, a better insurance fund than teaching people to make new designs on silks and satins, or giving them the privilege of reading translations at free libraries of French plays and novels. Had the state of Ireland been so law-abiding and contented since they had despoiled the Church there, and frittered away the plunder so obtained? No; they opened the flood gates of spoliation on the sister Isle, and it had not stopped at the Church. Were they again to have presented to the House a measure so utterly repugnant to the feelings and sentiments of Churchmen as that which was presented last Session? That measure was grossly and deliberately annoying and insulting regarding the mode Cathedrals were to be dealt with. This objectionable provision was to be thrust down the throats of Churchmen by the descendants of the Whigs, who at one time were thought to be staunch defenders of the Protestant religion in this country, by the aid of their Roman Catholic allies from Ireland, who, having in some way or other twenty more seats in the House than they were entitled to according to any just representative system, would vote the minority down by about that number. He was opposed to this paragraph in the gracious Speech from the Throne, because there was the best reason for believing that, while the Nonconformity now so prevalent in Wales was of comparatively recent origin, the life, energy and spirituality which the Church was exhibiting would draw back "to the old hive" the children of those who had been conscientiously withdrawn from her fold, and also because it may be the duty of England, it may be her proud destiny, to guard civilization against the withering blast of infidelity and atheism on the one hand, or of priestly oppression on the other, and he asked can she fulfil those tasks if called on to do so without the bulwarks of her National Church ?

Sir R. TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston) drew attention to the paragraph in the Queen's Speech referring to our relations with other countries. The statement relating to the settlement of the French frontier in the neighbourhood of our territory in Sierra Leone was satisfactory as far as it went, because for a long time there had been grave anxiety regarding what might be called the *Hinterland* of our West African possessions. The paragraph stating that the relations of the country with foreign Powers remained on a friendly and satisfactory footing, he earnestly hoped represented the real state of affairs. He did not doubt the sincerity of the Government's belief in the truth of the statement, but, as British Legislators, Members of that House were bound to consider for themselves whether that belief was well-founded. No doubt our relations with the United States, after the settlement of the Behring Sea Seal Fishery question, were satisfactory. We could also believe that our relations with Germany were good, especially since we had yielded to her on the question of the telegraphic communication and the belt or zone of territory in Eastern Africa. Were our relations really friendly and satisfactory with Russia and with France? Now, as regards Russia, there was every reason to think that the Tsar entertained the most friendly feelings towards this country, but was there no public opinion in Russia to which he must defer? Was there no strong party in Russia which would mould his will and even guide His Majesty's intentions? Certainly there was, and that public opinion and that party was distinctly aggressive in an Imperial and territorial sense. So long as that was the case and that party had a dominant voice in Russian councils, so long there would be danger for England. He strongly impressed upon the Secretary of State for India—and he was glad that the office was filled by a Statesman so capable, so patriotic, and so able—that the question of the Pamirs most intimately affected the Eastern Empire of England. Until it was settled, with a proper regard for British Interests, it could not, he submitted, be affirmed that our relations with Russia were friendly and satisfactory. It was the well-founded belief of those who understood India that in all these territorial arrangements Russia got the best of it and England was worsted. In all the arrangements of partition between Afghanistan and the Turcoman territory after the capture of Merv we were thoroughly worsted. [Mr. H. H. Fowler indicated dissent.] The right hon. Gentleman might not believe that, but all men who knew something of the country were firm in their belief to that effect, and they believed, moreover, that something of the same kind would happen in the Pamirs. It was well, therefore, that the right hon. Gentleman should be warned of the danger which was impending over us in that direction. The reference in the Queen's Speech to the war between China and Japan was mild and general in its language, but the future terms and conditions of peace between the belligerents excited anxiety in the mind of every patriotic Englishman, and why? Because one knew there was Russia looming like a black cloud in the background. He questioned whether the ordinary Englishman realised the enormous advantages gained by Japan. She had taken the Portsmouth of China and the Woolwich as well, and there was nothing except the ice and snow to prevent her marching and dictating terms of peace in Pekin. If a question of cession of territory arose the Russian difficulty at once stepped in. Was Korea to be independent? Would Russia permit it? If not, then everybody would be drawn into the vortex. Or supposing Japan marched to Pekin, what was to become of the Chinese Empire? If China broke up, then there would be a scramble for the spoils of that Empire. While these tremendous eventualities were impending, and while they had the knowledge forced upon them by the sad experience of the last 30 years of Russian ambition, it was not possible to affirm that our relations with Russia were satisfactory. With regard to France, could anyone who read extracts from the Parisian Press believe that the French Parliament—he might say also the French Foreign Office—really entertained friendly feelings for us at the present time? Would to God it were the case. Look at the incessant jealousy of France about Egypt. Naturally enough, he admitted; but still we had our duty to do. We were to remain in Egypt until she was fit to govern herself, and, so far as he could see, that might be for ever. Then there was the case of Siam, as to which he pressed the Government for information, and to insist that there should be some guarantee in the future for the independence of that country. These matters related to India in a serious and essential degree. If they were not satisfactorily arranged, India would not be safe. She would be between two fires, and, sooner or later, trouble must ensue. As to our relations with France, the last speeches made in Committee of Supply, in the Session of 1894, related to the territorial delimitation between the territory under French and British influence, from the sources of the Nile to our newly acquired territory in Uganda. It appeared to be astounding indiscretion on the part of the Government to have entered into an agreement with the Congo State without coming into a previous arrangement with France. It was humiliating to this country that France should say publicly that she would not submit to such an agreement, and that England must withdraw from it. It was true we did not withdraw, but we entered into further negotiations with France; and what had been the result? Up to the end of last Session it was eminently unsatisfactory to England. Had the position of affairs now improved? They did not know; but before the Session was much older they would have to insist upon knowing. These matters were really of the most supreme importance to England. It was said now that if such and such a measure were passed the country would be immeasurably richer. That seemed to be an important factor in Parliamentary matters. If that principle were applied to Foreign Affairs, he contended that England would be immeasurably richer if these matters to which he referred were properly settled, and immeasurably poorer if they were not. Another paragraph of the greatest, and he might say melancholy, interest, was that which related to Armenia. There again Russia came in, but in this case she seemed to have behaved with a degree of forbearance for which he would hardly have given her credit. She might have taken advantage of these troubles in Armenia to strengthen her position in Asia Minor, but, so far, she had resisted the temptation. If, however, Russia should be introduced into the heart of Asia Minor, what would be the position of England? England had given Turkey a guarantee that she should be protected against Russian aggression, so far as her Asiatic dominions were concerned, and in order to fulfil that obligation she occupied Cyprus. Was England going to continue her occupation of Cyprus, and not protect Turkey against Russian aggression? He hoped that the reports received from Armenia might be exaggerated. Inquiry would show that, and he thought it would be a great pity to discuss the matter while the inquiry was pending; but he thought it right to remind the House of the obligations under which this country lay, and of the great embarrassment she would be in in fulfilling those obligations if any misgovernment in Asia Minor should be proved. He was much obliged to the House for attending to his observations, but it was impossible to adduce more important matters for the consideration of the House. What he had said was only part of a preliminary skirmish. Other Members, better informed than he was, felt the same patriotic zeal in these matters, and were determined to press them to a legitimate conclusion. These matters, he assured the Government, would not be allowed to drop, and whatever opportunity might be allowed by the forms and regulations of the House would be utilized for the sake of the best interests of England.

MR. J. G. LAWSON (York, N. R., Thirsk) desired to treat the Queen's Speech as if it contained a *bona fide* programme which it was seriously intended should be carried out, although he could prove, by the showing of the Government themselves, that it did not contain any programme which could be so carried out, and what they should be engaged with this Session were not the matters contained in the Queen's Speech, but another very different matter indeed. But, speaking on the supposition that this was to be a *bona fide* working programme of what was set before them this Session, he desired to offer one or two remarks upon the proposals with regard to light railways. Having heard this subject discussed amongst the farmers' Clubs and Associations, and that morning at the Central Chamber of Agriculture, he felt it only right to call the attention of the Government to the fact that unless the agriculturists, in the matter of light railways, received some *bona fide* assistance, and were not made to provide that assistance themselves by being rated for the purpose of forming light railways, it would be but a poor crumb of comfort to offer to the agricultural interests. As the Bills of the Government were not definitely settled at this moment it was only right they should take every opportunity that presented itself of impressing upon the Government what were the conditions under which it was alone possible for the agriculturists to receive assistance from this proposal. If the scheme was to put upon the rates the expense of making the light railways, it would simply be taking money out of one pocket of the farmer and, perhaps, again putting it back into the pocket of the same or some other farmer. He hoped the proposal of the Government would be brought forward at a time when it could be adequately discussed with the view to the adoption of any practical suggestions which would result to the advantage of those whom it was desired to benefit. But he could hardly bring himself to believe that these proposals in the Queen's Speech were meant seriously to be the programme of the Session. It was a programme which was again crowded with a vast number of proposals, each one treading upon the other's heels, and preventing progress being made with any of them. There were ten, if not twelve measures mentioned—all of importance. The Prime Minister, speaking at Cardiff, said the Government were anxious that their programme should be a distinctly business programme, containing only those measures which they saw a reasonable prospect of passing. If they did this, said the noble Lord, they simply confused the public issues, and the mind of the public at large. But here were ten or twelve measures of importance in the Queen's Speech. Speaking on a previous occasion at Glasgow, the Prime Minister said they could only hope to carry one, or, at most, two measures of the first importance through Parliament in a single year. Did anybody deny that there were in this programme at least three measures of the first importance? There was the proposal for Wales to give to those who did not go to church the power to dispose of church funds. There was the measure for Parliament to give to the Irish tenants another slice of the landlords' property. Then there was for England the proposal to give to those who did not use public-houses the power of shutting up and closing the trade of the publicans, and interfering with their business. Surely those were three measures of the first importance, and yet it was declared by the Prime Minister to be impossible to take more than one, or, at the outside, two of these measures with any hope of being passed in one Session. The programme of the Government could not, therefore, be described as a business programme. Lord Rosebery, speaking at Cardiff, said that the campaign against the House of Lords was sufficient to tax the utmost strength of the Liberal Party at its very best. If that were so, in face of such a campaign, it was ridiculous to seriously put forward this list of measures. The House of Lords had been described by Liberal Statesmen as an impassable barrier, and the Chief Secretary for Ireland had said it was a huge dead weight of prejudice and passion. Surely, if that statement were true, the first object of those who believed it should be to call the other

House to account. Again, the late Prime Minister, speaking in the House of Commons in March, 1894, said the differences between the House of Lords and the House of Commons had reached such a development as to create a state of things which could not continue. But where was the effort to remedy that state of things, and to re-adjust those relations? The Chancellor of the Exchequer, too, had said that, when the House of Commons had put forward measures which they believed to be for the advantage of the country, they had been encountered by opposition in another place which destroyed the work of the representatives of the people. Why was this House to be asked to do all the work sketched in the Queen's Speech, if the Government believed that the other House was waiting to destroy the work of this House? The right hon. Gentleman said this was a great subject, and he compared Parliament with a watch of which the mainspring was prevented from acting. When the mainspring of a watch was broken it must be renewed, and, until it was renewed, it was useless to wind it up in the hope of making it go. Yet the House of Commons was there to wind up a watch the mainspring of which was said to be broken. At Edinburgh and Birmingham the present Prime Minister cried aloud for guidance, impulse, and inspiration; and the inspiration came from the Leeds Conference, which passed a resolution calling upon the Government to abolish the veto of the House of Lords, "as soon as practicable during the present Parliament." The present Parliament was again assembled, and the head of the Government had spoken, but he had not said anything about carrying out the resolution of his supporters. The Chief Secretary for Ireland declared the Leeds resolution a valuable and important one, said that it was the expression of a reasoned opinion from a representative body, and assumed that it would receive "that attention from the Cabinet which the gravity of the situation required." Still, the Government went on as if that resolution had never been passed. If the Leeds Conference were not sufficient, there was a Resolution passed by the National Liberal Federation at Newcastle. The framers rejoiced at the commanding position in which the Leeds Conference had placed the subject, and desired that the campaign should be vigorously pursued. It did not look as if that were to be in view of the legislation suggested by the Queen's Speech. They were there to wind up a watch, the mainspring of which had been broken: "to shave with a blunt razor," to adopt an expression of the right hon. Member for Midlothian; or, to adapt other phrases that had been used, ploughing the sands of the sea-shore, or attempting to fire cannon so constructed that it could not be discharged. The Prime Minister, during the recess, had excused himself from stating what he was going to do about the House of Lords, because the matter was such a high constitutional one that it could not be laid before any tribunal inferior to the High Court of Parliament. Now Parliament was assembled, and there was no suggestion that this high constitutional amendment was to be laid before it. Was it hoped that the divergence between the two Houses would grow less and that the question would settle itself? On the contrary, the Chief Secretary had said it was highly probable the divergencies would grow wider than they are at present. The President of the Local Government Board, speaking at Reading, candidly admitted that the question was one of great difficulty, because there were differences of opinion in the Liberal Party as to whether there should be one Chamber or two. Was it possible that it was in consequence of these differences that the Resolution was being kept back? At Cardiff the Prime Minister said that if the Government did not consult the susceptibilities of the House of Lords there would be a chance of a barren Session. Did they intend by the proposed measures to consult the susceptibilities of the House of Lords? If they had any feeling about the House of Lords would it not rather be in favour of wounding their susceptibilities and adopting the policy of trailing the coat? The real reason why the Resolution about the House of Lords was not brought forward was that if it was proposed a Dissolution would be imminent, and the Government were not anxious for a Dissolution. But there was every reason why a Dissolution should be faced by them. The right hon. Member for Midlothian, in 1874, said that if a majority returned at a General Election had sunk to such proportions that it could no longer carry on the business of the country with advantage, there was no resource but to appeal to the people, and yet the right hon. Gentleman at that time had a majority of 60 or 70, but the present majority was perhaps nearer six or seven. It was ridiculous to bring them there to discuss a programme when what the Government had at heart was, not the programme, but something far different, which ought to engage their attention at once, and which, when it was entered upon, would require all the energy they could give to it.

COLONEL C. E. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) rose and, after intimating that he desired to move an Amendment if the general Debate on the Address were over, ultimately gave way to

MR. W. AMBROSE (Middlesex, Harrow), who said he congratulated the Government on their action with regard to Armenia. But he remembered that, when the atrocities occurred in Bulgaria, although the Government of the day pursued a similar course, they received different treatment from the Opposition, who got up an agitation which influenced the following Election. It was said that in Ireland offences of all kinds had sunk to the lowest level, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer boldly attributed the decline to the prospect of Home Rule. Whatever effect that prospect might have on agrarian crime, which was included in the returns, it could not be supposed to have influenced the burglar and the ordinary assassin and thief; and he challenged the Government to show that Home Rule had anything to do with the diminution of ordinary crime. The raising of the question recalled the period of the Kilmainham Treaty, when Members of the House of Commons who had been deemed dangerous by the Prime Minister of the day were set at liberty on the understanding that they would use their influence to repress crime and outrage. He observed that in the Speech from the Throne it was said,—

> "Proposals will be submitted to you for remedying defects which experience has brought to light in the working of the Law of Landlord and Tenant in Ireland."

There was hardly such a thing as the Law of Landlord and Tenant in Ireland. There was such a thing before the Act of 1881, but what was established by that Act was a system of dual ownership. Everyone knew that the legislation of 1881 had resulted in serious difficulties between landlord and tenant, and in his opinion further legislation would only tend to aggravate the evils which were a necessary and proper result of the Act of 1881. It was said:

> "A Bill will be presented to you dealing with the Church Establishment in Wales."

It was not from the words of the Speech, but only from the speeches of Ministers at public meetings, that hon. Members could understand what was meant. What the Government really meant was the disestablishment and the robbery of the Church. They meant sacrilege: they meant to steal the lands and buildings of the Church and appropriate to secular purposes. A more heinous offence by a nation could hardly be contemplated. They were to have, in addition, a Bill for the popular control of the Liquor Traffic. He would like to see the Liquor Traffic properly controlled; but he was not sure they would secure a proper control by putting it in the hands of such a body as was suggested, because popular bodies were apt to be carried away by passion and impulse. He was afraid it was intended to interfere with vested interests, and especially with the freedom of the people, to do what they liked in regard to their own refreshment and conduct. If there was one thing he should set himself against it was interference with a man's personal liberty. He noticed, too, that they were to have a Bill for the abolition of plural voting. He was sorry to see this further attempt to interfere with the old principle of the constitution that taxation and representation should go together. In former days the Liberal Party held the view that those who had to find the money should have the control of it, but now it was argued that one set of people should find the money and another set of people should control and spend it. He saw no objection to a Bill for the payment of the charges of the Returning Officers at elections, but he feared that such a measure was simply held out as a bait to secure votes for the Bill for the payment of Members, and that when the latter Bill was passed hon. Members would have to whistle for the Returning Officers' Charges Bill. Her Most Gracious Majesty was made to say:

> "I regret that Agriculture continues in a seriously depressed condition."

Why, Agriculture was almost destroyed in this country. Sir James Caird told the Agricultural Commission that at least 30 per cent. of the profits of the landowners was gone; that 60 per cent. of the profits of the farmers was gone, and that 10 per cent. of the profits of the labourers was gone. What was the result? That it was impossible sometimes to grow corn in England at a profit. The same high authority told them that wheat must sell at 36s. per quarter if the English grower was to be paid. Land was going out of cultivation, and, as a consequence, our towns were full of labourers for whom there was no employment. Was there any remedy whatever? There was none promised by Her Majesty's Government. They said:

> "This subject is still under the consideration of the Commission which I appointed in the Autumn of 1893. In the meantime, a proposal will be submitted to you for facilitating the construction of Light Railways."

They began the Commission in 1893. They did nothing in 1893 and 1894. Here they were in 1895, and for this calamity which had overtaken the country they proposed the construction of light railways. It was utterly ridiculous. If instead of endeavouring to pull down the Constitution, and to pass all the various measures they enumerated, the Government would give their attention to the necessities of the trading, manufacturing and agricultural interests they might do some real good. The Speech was the more remarkable for what it did not contain than for what it did contain. At one time it was said that Ireland blocked the way. "Home Rule holds the field" was the language of the late Prime Minister; and it was intimated that no English legislation could proceed until that question was settled. The Home Rule Bill was thrown out by the House of Lords. What was the course for the Government to pursue if they really felt that they had a mandate to carry that measure? It was to have gone to the country at once, but that they dared not do. The object of the Government had been to complicate the issues before the country, and mix Home Rule up with other questions—the Welsh Church, Irish Land, and the Local Veto Bill—so that at the General Election they might succeed on any point they could, and then come back and say they had a mandate to carry Home Rule and pass their Resolution with regard to the House of Lords. Lord Rosebery, in his speeches at Leeds and Bradford, had spoken of this Resolution, yet there was not a word about it in the Queen's Speech. The House had a right to know what the Government intended to do, both as regarded the House of Lords and Home Rule. Was the matter to be held over them *in terrorem* for they knew not how long? If there was to be a Resolution with regard to the House of Lords, let the Government produce it at once, and not keep on passing Bills which they knew perfectly well the House of Lords would reject.

IMPERIAL CUSTOMS UNION.

COLONEL C. E. HOWARD VINCENT said everyone must be astonished that the Queen's Speech contained no reference to the Colonies, and more especially to the Convention at Ottawa in July last of all the self-governing Colonies. The only reference to the Colonies concerned the small Colony of Sierra Leone. It was his duty to call attention to this serious omission, and move an Amendment to the Address on the subject. He must also refer to the omission of reference to the depression of trade, which affected all the large towns in this country and threw a large number of persons out of employment. It was impossible that the Government could be unaware of the condition of things; if so, how was it that they did not call attention to a matter which was of the most vital importance to the great working classes of this country? But he was anxious not to raise any controversial matter in the Amendment he was desirous of submitting, which was

> "And this House humbly desires to represent to Your Majesty that steps should be taken to remove any Statutory or Treaty obstacle standing in the way of any arrangement which may be desired in the direction of a Customs Union between the different parts of the British Empire."

He hoped the Government might see their way to accept the Amendment, or give such an assurance with reference to the subject of it, as might give satisfaction to the great Colonies of Canada, Australasia, and South Africa, taking part in the Ottawa Convention. He need hardly remind the House that the moving spirit of the Convention was Sir John Thompson, whose tragic death, almost in the presence of his Sovereign, was mourned by every subject of the Queen. The President was the Hon. Sir Mackenzie Bowell, the present Premier of Canada. The Governments of Australasia and South Africa were represented by their most able statesmen. The Imperial Government was represented by a Special Commissioner, the Earl of Jersey, who was selected because of his special fitness and Colonial experience. His Report was presented to the Government many months ago, and had since been laid on the Table of the House. There had been ample time for the Government to come to some decision on the moderate recommendations contained in Lord Jersey's Report, which was agreed to by the Colonial Conference at Ottawa. Two Resolutions were carried absolutely unanimously by the delegates of the Colonies represented, and he might say the Colonies selected their most eminent statesmen to represent them. He should like to read the two Resolutions agreed to, and which he had abstracted from Lord Jersey's Report. The first Resolution was—

> "That provision should be made by Imperial legislation enabling the Dependencies of the Empire to enter into agreements of commercial reciprocity, including the power of making differential tariffs with Great Britain or with one another."

The second was as follows:

> "That this Conference is of opinion that any provisions in existing Treaties between Great Britain and any Foreign Power which prevent the self-governing Dependencies of the Empire from entering into agreements of commercial reciprocity with each other, or with Great Britain, should be removed."

A third resolution expressed the opinion of the Conference in favour of preferential arrangements (1) between Great Britain and her Colonies; and (2), pending such an event, between the Colonies *inter se.* This was also passed by a majority of the Colonies, but not quite unanimously, as some thought the wording a little faulty, and that this Clause—

> "That until the Mother Country can see her way to enter into Customs arrangements with her Colonies, it is desirable that, when empowered so to do, the Colonies of Great Britain, or such of them as may be disposed to accede to this view, take steps to place each other's products in whole or in part on a more-favoured Customs basis than is accorded to the like products of foreign countries."

Colonel C. E. Howard Vincent.

—was somewhat in the nature of a threat to the Mother Country. This, he had good reason to know, was far from the intention of the mover, the able Finance Minister of Canada. As to the first Resolution enabling the dependencies of the Empire to enter into agreements of commercial reciprocity with Great Britain or with one another, Lord Jersey had written:

> "It was clearly the opinion of all the Colonial delegates that it is desirable that the Colonies represented should make arrangements with one another, and, if possible, with Great Britain, which would give British an advantage over foreign products, and that for this purpose any statutory or treaty provisions which stand in the way should be removed. It was felt by the delegates that, so far as might be possible, British subjects should take what they have to import from their own kindred rather than from foreign States."

This view, if not adopted by Her Majesty's Ministers, was largely shared by the people of this country and by the Colonies, and involved no question of Protection, but simply carried out the original object in the acquisition of the Empire, namely, the development of trade. All that was needed was a short Act of half-a-dozen words repealing the section in the Constitution Acts of the Australian Colonies prohibiting them from making differential commercial conventions with other over-sea Colonies. This power had been granted to them as regarded Colonies on the Australian Continent by the Imperial Act of 1873, 36 Vict. ch. 22. It was a power already possessed by Canada, South Africa, and the Crown Colonies. There was consequently no ground whatever for withholding it from Australia, and especially as it would probably lead at once to a great development of trade with Canada. He might remind Her Majesty's Government that last year the Colony of Victoria had sent home a Special Commissioner, the Hon. Robert Reid, to urge this concession. Lord Jersey had reported that

> "This statutory prohibition appears to be of a very exceptional, if not of unique, character,"

and

> "the repeal of the provisions in question is

free from any serious objection, either on constitutional or on commercial grounds. I consider, therefore, that it will be a consistent and successful policy to recognise the reasonable nature of the request that the self-governing Colonies should have the power, subject to the veto of the Crown, to make such fiscal arrangements with each other as may seem to them most conducive to their commercial prosperity."

The second resolution dealt with the removal of any treaty obstacles which might exist to the fullest possible extension of British trade. It might be asked, was it possible that any such treaties had ever been concluded by a British Government with a foreign power? Unfortunately it was so. On July 23rd, 1862, a treaty was entered into with Belgium, and on May 30th, 1865, with the German Zollverein, each containing, without consultation with the Colonies, a clause reported to Parliament in 1888 by the Foreign Office

> "as precluding the preferential fiscal treatment of British goods in the Colonies and dependencies of the British Crown, and while these two treaties remained in force these express stipulations extend to all countries whose commercial treaties with Great Britain contain a most favoured nation clause, and apply to British Colonies."

Lord Salisbury, addressing the United Empire Trade League in 1891, said—

> "With regard to those two unlucky treaties that were made by Lord Palmerston's Government some thirty years ago, I am sure the matter of the relation of our Colonies could not have been fully considered. We have tried to find out from official records what species of reasoning it was that induced the Statesmen of that day to sign such very unfortunate pledges; but I do not think they had any notion that they were signing any pledges at all. I have not been able to discover that they at all realised the importance of the engagements upon which they were entering. We shall be glad indeed to take every opportunity that arises for delivering ourselves from those unfortunate engagements."

After consultation with the Law Officers of the Crown and other authorities, the present Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs stated in the House of Commons, on July 30th 1894, the general effect of the stipulations of the treaties to be: (1) that they do not prevent differential treatment by the United Kingdom in favour of British Colonies; (2) they do prevent differential treatment by British Colonies in favour of the United Kingdom; (3) they do not prevent differential treatment by British Colonies in favour of each other. We were consequently face to face with this extraordinary position, that while the Colonies and the Dependencies founded by Great Britain could make any commercial arrangements they pleased between themselves, except as before mentioned, as to Australia, the Mother Country which had established them for purposes of trade, had by treaty with foreign nations prevented these Colonies and Dependencies giving her goods any freer market than they gave to the goods of foreign rivals who had not lost a life or had expended a shilling in acquiring them. Lord Jersey had reported, and let the House remember he was a well-known free trader—

> "Now if the advantages of Colonial preferential arrangements are not wanted by Great Britain, that is, if she is willing to allow differential conventions between her Colonies without demanding for herself the benefit of the minimum tariff, it does not seem necessary to take any action with regard to these treaties. But if these advantages are desired, it would be necessary to consider whether effect could be given to the second Resolution. The Resolution was obviously prompted by consideration for the interests of the Mother Country."

Lord Jersey added—

> "Her Majesty's Government will perhaps consider whether it would be possible, without denouncing the treaties, to induce the Belgian and German Governments to consent to the abrogation of the particular clauses specially referring to the British Colonies. It is hardly necessary to observe that these clauses are of a very unusual character; and with regard to the question of the consideration given for them, I may quote the words of the President (the Hon. Sir Mackenzie Bowell, the present Premier of Canada): 'There is nothing in either the German or Belgian treaties that gives any advantage to Great Britain or Canada over other countries. . . . We receive no advantages from the treaties which exist at present over any other nation in the way of tariff in either of these countries."

He would not deny that these two treaties might contain other provisions advantageous to British trade. But it seemed absurd to suppose that two nations so closely allied to us as Belgium and Germany, both in dynasty and commerce, whose best customers we were, of whose goods we had bought in 1893 and again last year upwards of £45,000,000 worth, of which not less than £25,000,000 represented wages to competing labour, and had given all, or nearly all, of them an absolutely free market, in spite of heavy duties imposed by each of them against British goods, would be so unreasonable as to oppose the natural desire of the British people not to have the hands of commerce made freer within their own Empire. In practical illustration of the evil effect upon our trade of these two treaties, or rather these two clauses of half-a-dozen lines, he might remind the House of the offer recently made by the right hon. Cecil Rhodes, to whom all would wish a prosperous voyage to the scene of his invaluable Imperial labours, an offer still open, that the duties upon British goods entering that great white country of the future—Matabeleland and Mashonaland—eight times the size of the United Kingdom, should never be charged a higher duty than at present. This magnificent offer had been refused by the Secretary of State for the Colonies in his tender solicitude, not for British interests, but for those of foreigners who want to reap where we have sown. He need hardly point out that the termination of these restrictive clauses by the year's notice required, would not of necessity make any difference in the Customs arrangements between the United Kingdom and the other portions of the Empire. All that it would do would be to remove the obstacles which now blocked the way to freer trade with our own kith and kin. There was every reason to believe that several of the Colonies would be quite ready to give us an advantage of 5 or 10 per cent. over the foreigner, even without any reciprocal advantage here. Indeed, Canada and South Africa had already offered this. Surely Free Traders would not block the way to freer trade within the Empire? That there was a strong popular movement in the direction of his motion was not to be denied. He had addressed large meetings on the subject in every part of Great Britain, and also in Canada and the West Indies. No dissentient voice had ever been raised, and the most enthusiastic advocates were to be found among the working men whose kindred had peopled the Colonies. The Conference recently held at Newcastle of the National Union of Conservative Associations, to the chairmanship of which he had recently had the honour of being elected, had endorsed unanimously the Ottawa Resolutions. The prize of 1,000 guineas offered by the proprietors of *The Statist* newspaper for the best scheme of a Customs Union, and the nomination of such distinguished judges as Lord Lorne and Lord Playfair by Lord Salisbury and the Prime Minister, had shown clearly the direction of the public feeling on the question and its non-party character. His right hon. Friend the Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, whose opinion on this subject would be respected upon both sides of the House, said, upon February 17th, 1891—

> "I must enter my protest against an extreme application of the view that under no circumstances could we make fiscal arrangements with the Colonies without injuring other portions of our trade. If we find we could make the whole Empire one as regards Customs, surely we have the same right of Zollverein Union with our Colonies as Germany has with Bavaria, or the United States among themselves. I claim for ourselves the same right. But how near are we to any such consummation? What chance or hope have the Colonies held out to us that they are prepared to move in this direction?"

The whole of the self-governing Colonies had now with one voice held out not only the hope to us that they were prepared to move in this direction, but had actually made a distinct and formal offer. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition, and if he mistook not, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, had directly or indirectly intimated that an expression of Colonial feeling, such as had been delivered, could not be ignored. When the House of Commons of Canada resolved on April 5th, 1892—on the Motion of Mr. Alexander McNeill, seconded by Mr. Desjardins, a leading representative of French Canadians—that in certain conditions it would be prepared to make a substantial reduction in the duties imposed upon British manufactured goods, the *Times* had observed—

> "We are bound to take note of the fact that the Parliament of the Canadian Dominion has made an offer, which, if backed by the other leading Colonies in Australia and South Africa, would be deserving of careful consideration."

The offer had now been backed by all the leading Colonies, and would be supported by India if the Secretary for India were willing. It would prevent that difficulty with which Lancashire was now face to face—the necessity in India of putting a duty on the imports of this country, notwithstanding the enormous sacrifices of blood and treasure which this country has made for India. In the interest of his constituents, who were grievously afflicted at the present time by the depression of trade and industry, he must earnestly appeal to the Government to assent to this motion. On behalf of the whole industrial community he claimed that something should be done by any Government of any Party to redeem the present state of British industry. In view of the unanimous resolutions passed by the self-governing Colonies in conference, it was not becoming on the part of Her Majesty's Government to do anything less than their utmost to meet the Colonies' views and wishes. Those resolutions were, moreover, passed as much in the interest of British as of Colonial trade, as was proved by the Report of the Government's own Commissioner. He hoped the House would have an emphatic assurance that the Government would deal with this matter without delay, and be begged to move, as a friendly addition to the Address—

> "And this House desires humbly to represent to Your Majesty that steps should be taken to remove any Statutory or Treaty obstacles standing in the way of any arrangement which may be desired in the direction of a Customs Union between the different parts of the British Empire."

MR. A. F. GODSON (Kidderminster), in seconding the Resolution, said, that all parties alike had the same opinion that every obstacle to freer communication between England and the Colonies should be removed. The two Treaties with Belgium and Germany most materially affected the trade of the district which he represented. He hoped the Government would give a definite and satisfactory assurance that night.

THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar) said that he had not much complaint to make of the tone of his hon. Friend's speech. He was glad to think that on this occasion, as in respect of many of the hon. Members' speeches, it was not necessary to discuss the question of Free Trade. The hon. Member carefully avoided dealing with that matter, and he was wise. Certainly there had been no intention of throwing any slight on the Colonies by not mentioning in the Queen's Speech the Ottawa Conference. But perhaps the hon. Member forgot that in the Queen's Speech at the close of last Session a distinct and satisfactory reference to that Conference was made, and, therefore, it was perhaps unnecessary to refer to it again. All those who were interested in the closer relations between the Mother Country and the Colonies, would desire to express the satisfaction with which they had learnt of the way in which the proceedings at the Ottawa Conference were carried on, of the unanimity which prevailed, and of the strong expressions of loyalty to the Mother Country and of a desire to foster intercolonial and British relations. This was the first opportunity which he had had of saying anything in regard to this matter, and, on behalf of the Colonial Office, he should like to acknowledge their indebtedness to Lord Jersey, not only for the great tact which he showed at the Ottawa Conference, but also for the very valuable and lucid Report which had been circulated, and was now in the hands of Members. The hon. Member rather assumed that the Government had neglected to consider this matter and to deal with it. He could assure the hon. Member that the Government had given it the greatest possible attention, and he would be satisfied to learn that it was proposed in the present Session to take action in regard to one matter, and that another matter raised at the Conference was under consideration, and it was hoped a solution would be found. The hon. Member had referred to three resolutions moved at the Conference. One of them he wisely put aside—that relating to a Customs Union between the different parts of the Empire and Great Britain. He put it aside because it raised the whole question of our fiscal system, and was only carried by a majority of five to three at the Conference. It was, therefore, on a different footing from the others. The second resolution proposed and accepted at the Conference referred to the question whether the Australian Colonies should be allowed to enter into fiscal arrangements with the other self-governing Colonies. Under their original constitution the Australian Colonies were prohibited altogether from entering into fiscal arrangements with one another or with other Colonies. On its merits it was quite right that the Australian Colonies, like the other self-governing Colonies, should be freely allowed to enter into fiscal arrangements with each other, as Canada could do with the Cape. He thought that his hon. Friend would be satisfied with the statement that the Government would introduce a Bill during the present Session. As regarded the third point raised that was a more intricate matter—as to whether any obligation in our present Treaties prevented us from allowing our Colonies to make intercolonial fiscal arrangements with one another, and whether England was prevented from entering into those arrangements. Any proposal between one Colony and another on these matters must be one of the reserved Bills to be sent home and subject to veto if necessary. The position was this—that by two of his hon. Friend's unfortunate Treaties, made years ago before these questions were considered, their hands were, it might be thought, in some way bound. For years past there had always been in every Commercial Treaty a clause excluding any Colony which did not wish to enter into the fiscal conditions under which the trade of this country had been carried on. He could assure his hon. Friend that, as far as their information went, the Government believed that those two Treaties did not prevent any intercolonial arrangement, and did not prevent England from giving preferential treatment to her Colonies as against foreign nations; but, at the present moment, those two Treaties did prevent the Colonies getting preferential treatment in regard to English goods. He would ask his hon. Friend to be satisfied with the assurance which he had given. The Government, he could assure him, were actively employed in looking into the matter, and were in hopes that some satisfactory arrangement would be brought about. In conclusion, he could only say that the matters which had been referred to, and which were raised in Lord Jersey's Report, were discussed much more from an intercolonial point of view than from the point of view of the fiscal arrangements of the Empire at large. It was a much larger question whether England was at liberty to depart from her established fiscal policy. The Government certainly desired to meet the Colonies with all the favour they could, and he trusted that the Bill which they might introduce and the Administrative Acts following thereupon would enlarge intercolonial trade throughout the country.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT thought it hardly necessary, after the assurance just given on the part of the Government, to put the House to the trouble of dividing.

The Amendment was then by leave withdrawn.

MR. V. GIBBS (Herts, St. Albans) said that the condition of Agriculture at the present time had been by no means exaggerated. Desirable as Light Railways were, they could not possibly affect all the evils from which Agriculture was now suffering. One of those evils was the low and continually falling price of produce, and he could not see that any measure which would bring more produce into the towns could possibly benefit the outlying districts. The fall in prices must arise from over-production and the depreciation in the currency, and he was certain that sooner or later, some Government must deal in a drastic measure with the currency question. The condition of a country where the currency steadily appreciated and the prices of produce steadily depreciated was most serious and important, and he could not conceive any subject which could better arouse the attention of the Government. He had no doubt that the cause of misfortunes from which all commerce was now suffering was the condition of the currency. In regard to the reference, in the earlier portion of the Queen's Speech, as to the unfortunate war between China and Japan, he hoped the House and the country might rely on the Government to secure at the end of that war the free opening of the Chinese markets to English commerce. The condition of trade in our towns at this moment was very distressing, and he hoped that the Government would not lose sight of this opportunity to effect some improvement in it.

MR. H. SETON-KARR (St. Helen's) called attention to the paragraph in the Speech from the Throne dealing with agricultural depression, and asked the Government how it was that they had failed to take any notice of the great industrial depression which was now prevailing in the country. He desired to move an Amendment on a broader basis than that which had been proposed by the hon. Member for Sheffield, namely,—

> "That this House humbly expresses its regret, in view of the great industrial as well as agricultural depression now prevailing in this country, that no adequate portion of the time of Parliament is proposed to be given to the amelioration or relief of any such depression."

That Amendment depended upon three propositions: (1), the great agricultural and industrial depression prevailing and the large numbers of men desirous to obtain work and unable to obtain it; (2), the number of legislative proposals which demanded the consideration of the House; and (3), that the Government, who were absolute masters of the time of the House, were not giving any adequate proportion of its time to legislative proposals. On the first point the Government had admitted in the Speech that there was great agricultural depression, and he was surprised that they had made no reference to the industrial depression. It was admitted that the exports of domestic produce were a sure test of the industrial prosperity or the reverse of any country. It was a remarkable fact, moreover, that directly they had a Radical Administration in power the figures showed that trade depression at once prevailed. Take, as an example, the price of wheat. When the late Unionist Administration was in power wheat was 35s. a quarter; the price had risen under the late Administration. But during the last three years, under the rule of the present Government, the price of wheat had steadily fallen until it was now only 20s. a quarter. The figures in connection with the exports of domestic produce showed exactly the same phenomenon when a Radical Government was in power. In 1892 the exports of domestic produce were £227,000,000 in value; in 1893 they were £218,500,000, and last year they had fallen to £216,000,000. Manufacturers of all kinds also were transferring their capital to other countries, and the trade was leaving our shores. Yet the Government refused to take note of the industrial depression. He cited his own constituency of St. Helen's as an illustration, and showed that great depression existed there at this moment. St. Helen's, at one time, supplied a fourth of the goods tonnage of the London and North-Western Railroad; but the wants of the men in that district had not received any consideration on the part of the Government. Though the Government were responsible for the time of the House they had given no indication that they were going to propose any measures to alleviate the distress. There used to be a time when private Members had the opportunity of bringing in Bills dealing with questions affecting their own constituencies, but they had been denied that right by the Government. The Government had deliberately refused to give an opportunity for the consideration of these important social questions. He was interested in a Bill for the amendment of the Merchandise Marks Act, and he would point out that in the glass bottle trade, in which hundreds, if not thousands, of men were employed, large quantities of glass bottles were at present imported into this country and sold as of English make, with the result that the trade suffered most severely. They had never, however, been able to get the subject considered since the present Government came into power, and they wished to know why Bills were not allowed to be brought in to benefit the masses of the country. In the Session of 1894 the hon. Member for Sheffield moved an Amendment to the Address stating that the great depression in this country called for the immediate attention of Parliament. The right hon. Gentleman, the then President of the Board of Trade, got up, and amongst other excuses for not dealing with the question, said that the Labour Commission at that time had not reported. That excuse could not be made now. The Commission had reported several months ago, and had made something like fourteen specific recommendations dealing with arbitration and conciliation in labour disputes. He admitted that there was a Bill put forward upon that subject, but he wished to know why the recommendations as to the organisation and development of labour, the wages and hours of labour, non-unionist labour, and the sanitary condition of workmen's dwellings, had not received a more prominent place in the Queen's Speech. He quoted other instances in which the

Government had had an opportunity given them of bringing in legislation on such matters, and had not taken advantage of it. On December 12th, 1893, a motion was moved by the hon. Member for West Ham, pointing out the number of deaths in London from starvation, and asking the Government to inquire into the causes. The right hon. Gentleman, the leader of the Opposition, made a most interesting speech on that occasion; he reminded the House that fourteen different remedies were mentioned in that particular debate. In fact, numberless proposals had been put forward, and the Government had absolutely ignored them all. The obvious moral to be drawn from the Report of the Labour Commission was that the Government should now give the House time for the consideration of these matters. Not only had they declined to give any time themselves, but their practice during the last three years had been also to misappropriate the time of private Members. They all admitted that there was great industrial depression in the country. Numberless proposals had been brought forward in that House to alleviate or remedy this state of things. The Government had not, he urged, devoted adequate time to these matters in the past, and what prospect was there of any time whatever being given up to their consideration this Session? They were warned that the Church was to be disestablished in Wales, that there were to be two Irish Land Bills, and that one of the most thorny questions which could be imagined, the subject of Temperance, was to be dealt with. Then they were to have a Resolution which would embody the principle of the abolition of the House of Lords. What chance would private Members have of getting any share of the time of the House? He thought it was time that they should enter a protest against the further misuse of the time of the House.

COLONEL W. KENYON-SLANEY (Shropshire, Newport) said, he wished to refer to one or two points in the Royal Speech. He agreed with the declaration which had been made that it was intended to deal with Imperial matters in an Imperial spirit, and he hoped those words would find an echo in the legislation which the Government might propose. As to the question of naval expenditure, they did not get that assurance from the Chancellor of the Exchequer which they expected to have. He hoped they would be assured that there would be no want of honesty and completeness in the way in which the naval expenditure would be dealt with by the Government. It was generally recognised throughout the country that the naval expenditure should be no matter of Party voting, and that it should be large and sufficient. He hoped for an assurance from the Government that there would be no attempt to catch votes in connection with this matter, and that the expenditure would be based on a scheme for carrying out a programme to place the country in the position in which it ought to be with regard to the naval establishments. With regard to China and Japan and the state of Armenia, he had little to say. He came to the question of Ireland, and they were asked did they endorse the satisfaction felt as to the decrease of criminal offences? They did endorse it heartily. If there were a competition between that side of the House and the other on this question, it was an honourable one as to which system was the best. Both Governments had probably taken the right measures to meet the necessities of the time and both were to be congratulated on their success. He invited those who asked them to look at this question in a calm and just spirit to remember that their opponents' view deserved consideration even though it might conflict with some of their prejudices. An hon. Member opposite had spoken in positive terms of the absolute necessity of dealing with the question of the evicted tenants. They on that side of the House did not agree with the terms "must" and "shall" in a case of that sort. They recollected the circumstances connected with the evictions, and although they had every sympathy with the victims of a ridiculous agitation, they had not much sympathy with those who came and said that legislation must be passed. It would be wiser for these people to base their claims on the ground that they had been misled. The question of the Welsh Church was a thorny subject. He presumed he was correct in thinking that the necessity for the Bill rested entirely upon the increasing opinion of the Nonconformists of Wales in favour of such a measure. He pointed to the fact that the defeated candidate at Evesham had alleged as one of the primary reasons of his defeat that dissent generally was waning in that constituency. If that was the case in Worcestershire, might it not possibly be that over the border in Wales there did not exist that strong desire for separation which the Government thought justified them in their action. Of course, they on that side regarded the measure as fraught with immense mischief, and they would probably oppose it to a certain extent—to an extent that would prevent it passing. Living on the borders of Wales, and having a large interest there, he had not been able to ascertain that the feeling was so genuine, so widespread, or so keen as appeared on the surface. However, he was quite willing to allow that there were two sides to the question. In regard to the Local Veto Bill, the Seconder of the Address made a curious admission. He said he was glad the Chancellor of the Exchequer had been willing to obtain certain modifications of the former Bill, because it would create a half-way house for the votes of the people. He did not think that admission would be satisfactory to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It was a curious fact that they had it on the uncontradicted assertion of the Seconder of the Address that the Liquor Bill was to be altered in order that a half-way house might be created to catch the votes of the population. Another curious statement had been made in reference to plural voting, and it was to the effect that there were classes now who had the vote, that paid no taxes, either directly or indirectly. It was only last Session that there was a great conflict of opinion on the point as to whether taxes were paid directly or indirectly by certain classes of the population, and he thought the statement referred to was curiously in conflict with the various assertions which had been previously made on the matter. It was a curious state of things that they could find no harmony of argument or assertion between the supporters of the Government and Ministers themselves on these important questions. With regard to the question of Agricultural Depression, it was impossible for anyone who had any knowledge of the rural districts to speak of the matter in other than the most serious terms. Hon. Members who were deeply interested in the subject did their best to raise the matter last Session, and to point out the terrible condition of Agriculture. They pleaded for ameliorative Measures, but they were met on the part of the Government, either by neglect, or coldness, or the stereotyped reply that there was no time to deal with the matter. Notwithstanding that Agriculture was bleeding from every vein, and was rapidly dying out as one of the industries of the country, the greatest blow which has ever been inflicted upon it was the Budget of last year. The evil effects of that blow were being realised more and more every day. As time went on, more and more estates would be subjected to that iniquitous Budget, and more and more would the agricultural classes experience the ruinous effects of it. He urged that great anxiety ought to be shown on the part of the Advisers of Her Majesty to deal with this question in a way which would tend to palliate former mistakes, and to avert what might otherwise become a great National disaster. They looked with keen anxiety that something genuine, earnest, and real might now be done in the matter, but he regretted to say, that they were met with the assertion that it was really unfair, at present, to ask the Government to suggest any remedy, that a Royal Commission was sitting at that moment, and that, therefore, it would be premature and unwise to take out of the lips of that Royal Commission any pronouncements on the question that it might make sooner or later.

The Government, however, did not say that absolutely nothing was to be done before the Report of the Commission was issued, and they had thought right to propose an immediate Measure for the benefit of the agricultural interest. That immediate Measure was to be the construction of light railways. The Mover of the Address had spoken of the boon which such railways would be when they brought producer and consumer into closer connection. They might be a boon in that way, no doubt, but it should be borne in mind that no great advantage would be gained by the producer unless the consumer was prepared to give him a price for his produce which would make his efforts remunerative. Many hon. Members fail to recognise that that which might produce great good in some districts, might do very little good in others. There were, no doubt, districts at present not well served by railways, in which the introduction of light railways would be beneficial; but the benefit would depend upon this, whether the introduction of light railways into those districts was to be in the shape of a boon or a burden. By throwing the expense of the change upon the localities the State would probably augment the disadvantages under which they laboured at present. Unless no fresh burden was to be imposed upon localities under the scheme of the Government, it was not worth talking about or bringing forward. Upon this point they had heard nothing as yet from any responsible Member of the Government. If the Government were not prepared to establish their scheme out of Imperial resources; if they intended that any fresh burden should be imposed upon localities, then their proffered boon to the agricultural interest was a mere farce and humbug.

Major RASCH (Essex, S.E.) wished to know who was going to pay for these light railways. Unless the Agriculturists of his part of the county got those railways very soon, all he could say was there would be nothing for them to carry. He ridiculed the idea propounded last Session by the right hon. Gentleman, now Secretary of State of India, that the burden of local taxation now was infinitely lighter on rural districts than on urban districts. What were the facts? A man farming, say 1,000 acres of land paid something like £400 a year in tithe, rates and taxes, or about 8s. or 8s. 6d. an acre. A man living in town was rated on his house alone, and on a house rented at, say £100 he paid £30 a year in taxes. The statement of the right hon. Gentleman was therefore ridiculous. Now light railways were very expensive, costing from £4,000 to £5,000 a year, and in addition the promoters had to go to Parliament for the requisite powers. The expense of that, as was well known, was enormous; while the requirements of the Board of Trade were such as to make light railways by no means inexpensive to work. But there was a way out of the difficulty. Let the President of the Board of Trade dismiss the idea of starting light railways and substitute instead the system of Steam Tramways, which had been tried with great success in France and Belgium. In constructing Steam Tramways, the promoters had not to incur expense in a Committee Room upstairs. Steam Tramways could be laid by the side of the ordinary high road, and there would be no diffiiculty about getting land. If land was required, why should not the County Council have the power to arrange the transaction, subject to the advice and sanction of the Board of Trade, with some other Government department. Then in the case of Steam Tramways, trolly roads could be constructed to farms, and there was no conceivable reason why the great expense which would be incurred by laying down light railways should not be got over by the construction of Steam Tramways. But that did not do away with the main question, and that was, if these light railways were going to be constructed, who was going to pay for them. If the Government were going to give them, and require them to be paid for out of the rates, then he would rather not have them at all.

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall) moved, the adjournment of the Debate.

Mr. J. MORLEY (Newcastle-upon-Tyne) said, the Government would make no objection to the Motion.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned at ten minutes to Twelve o'clock till To-morrow Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 6th February 1895.

The House met at Twelve of the Clock.

QUESTIONS.

PRIMARY EDUCATION IN IRELAND.

Mr. SEXTON (Kerry, N.): I wish to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland a question, of which I have given him private notice. I wish to ask him if he has any statement to make on the question of Primary Education in Ireland.

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. J. Morley, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): I will tell my hon. Friend, as well as I can on such short notice, how matters stand. The Education Act of 1892 only came into operation on January 1, 1894, and the Government did not conceive that they would be able to take a complete review of the operation of the Act of 1892 until they had had one year's experience of it. That year did not expire until February 1894. The Act affected 118 places. In 29 of these no School Attendance Committees under the Act have been appointed. In 89 places such Committees have been appointed, but in 53 only Attendance Officers have been appointed, without whom the Act can scarcely be enforced. In 18 places difficulties as to funds have been found to exist and as to the statutory powers of raising the necessary funds; and the operation of the Act has been thereby to a considerable degree impeded. This is one head of the comparative failure of the Act, but it is owing to certain defects in the Act. It is partly due also to the refusal of the Local Authorities in upwards of 20 places to put the Act in operation so long as certain classes of Schools are excluded from participation in the grant. It will be my duty, in dealing with this first head of failure, to re-introduce as soon as possible the amending Bill I laid before the House last year; and, further, in reference to the second head of failure—namely, the refusal in 20 places (including such places as Cork, Waterford, and Limerick) of the Local Authority to put the Act in operation—I have felt it right to address a communication to the Commissioners of National Education, inviting them to consider the expediency of making such alterations in the rules of the National Board as would admit of the extension of State aid to Schools which may be recognised as efficient for the purposes of the Education Act of 1892, in proportion to the amount of elementary secular education provided by them in localities affected by the Act, in which the Commissioners shall be satisfied that adequate provision exists for the elementary education of pupils of the several religious denominations, either in National Schools or else in Schools managed by the same religious denomination as the pupils. The matter will be considered by the Commissioners in a few days, and I hope they will be able to assist the Government in devising some remedy for what is an admitted breakdown of a most important Act.

Sir T. LEA (Londonderry, S.): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he will await the reply of the Education Commissioners before he introduces his Bill into the House; and also whether the House will be made acquainted with the text of the reply of the Commissioners?

Colonel NOLAN (Galway, N.): Has not the right hon. Gentleman already waited two-and-a-half years, and would it not be better not to wait any longer?

Mr. J. MORLEY: In answer to my hon. and gallant Friend, I have waited two-and-a-half years in order to ascertain how the Act of 1892 would work. In answer to the hon. Baronet, I have to say that I shall at once introduce the amending Bill, because it deals with matters for which I am responsible, and in that Bill the opinion of the Commissioners is sought. With regard to the second question, I shall consider whether what the hon. Baronet asks can be done. I have no desire to keep anything back from the House.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I should like to know whether the right hon. Gentleman can give us the text of the communication he has made to the Board. Every word of that communication ought to be weighed.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

Mr. J. MORLEY: I will, of course, consider that. It will probably be more convenient to lay the letter on the Table with the answer.

SWAZILAND.

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Eccleshall): I beg to ask the Under Secretary for the Colonies—(1) whether he can generally state the terms or conditions of the reply given by Lord Ripon to the Swazi Envoys; and (2) whether the Colonial Office has received any answer or statement from the Swazi Government with regard to the Convention concluded between Sir H. Loch and President Kruger in December.

The UNDER SECRETARY FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): In answer to the first question, I think it would be the best and simplest way for me to read the message given, on behalf of the Queen, to the Swazi Envoys. It is as follows:—

> "I am commanded by the Queen to inform you that, while Her Majesty is sensible of the confidence in the justice of her rule which is implied by the offer of allegiance which you have made to Her Majesty by order of the Queen Regent and Council of the Swazi nation, the Queen is precluded by her Treaty engagements from accepting the allegiance which you have tendered.
>
> The Queen desires me to say that Sir Henry Loch, her High Commissioner in South Africa, in preparing the system of administration which he drew up last year in concert with the Government of the South African Republic, and which has been embodied in the organic proclamation which the Queen Regent and Council have been invited to sign, acted in full accordance with the instructions issued to him by Her Majesty's Government.
>
> The Queen is convinced that in framing that system Sir Henry Loch was animated by a sincere desire to do the best that could be done under the existing circumstances for the interests of the Swazi people, and Her Majesty desires you to tell this to the Queen Regent, the Queen Mother, the King, and the Council; and to inform them that it is Her Majesty's wish that they should be guided by the advice of her High Commissioner in South Africa, who represents the Queen in that part of the world, and possesses Her Majesty's entire confidence."

I will just say that I laid dummy papers on the Table of the House yesterday. With regard to the second question, I understand the hon. Member wants to know what is the Swazi reply to the convention negotiated last year between Sir H. Loch and President Kruger. That Convention was not communicated to the Swazi Government, because it would only come into force in the event of their not agreeing to what was negotiated last year—in the event, that is, of their not agreeing to the proposal for the acceptance of an organic proclamation. Therefore, really, so far as this particular Convention is concerned, it has not been communicated to them, and, therefore, we have not received any answer from them.

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: Have the Government received any communication from the Swazi Government that they are ready to issue an organic proclamation? Perhaps the hon. Gentleman can inform the House what are the principal provisions in the arrangement concluded between the British Government and the Boer Government for the protection of Swaziland?

Mr. S. BUXTON: In regard to the first point, I have only to say that I think it is unfortunate that any Debate should take place on the subject of Swaziland at the | present moment. In the first place, we have just issued papers in dummy, and they will be circulated as soon as possible; and, in the second place, the Swazi Council meets to-day or to-morrow to settle whether they will or will not consent to an organic proclamation. As regards the organic proclamation itself, the hon. Member is in full possession of all the terms of it, as it has already been published in a Blue Book. The organic proclamation to which the Swazis are asked to consent is that founded on the Convention of 1893, which we have already discussed in the House. The proclamation provides, amongst other things, that the King shall be the Paramount Chief; that the Swazis shall retain their ancient laws and customs, so far as they are not inconsistent with humanity; and that they shall be secured in the continued use and occupation of their lands and their grazings and agricultural rights. These guarantees are continued in the organic proclamation, and, of course, will be enforced by Her Majesty's Government.

BALLOT FOR BILLS AND MOTIONS.

Mr. J. MORLEY, on behalf of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, moved—

> "That all Members who desire to ballot, whether for Bills or Motions, for the first four

Tuesdays of the Session, do hand in their names at the Table during the Sitting of the House on Tuesday and Wednesday, and that a copy of such notices be handed in at the latest during the Sitting of the House on Thursday, and that no Bills other than Government Bills be introduced in anticipation of the Ballot."

The Motion was agreed to.

ADJOURNED DEBATE ON THE ADDRESS.

THE TRANSVAAL AND SWAZILAND.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall) rose to move the following Amendment to the Address:—

> "That this House regrets the neglect of Her Majesty's Government to call attention in the gracious Speech from the Throne to the injustice with which British subjects in the Transvaal are treated by the Boer Government and to the abandonment of the claims of our Swazi allies to independent security."

He said, that, if the answers of the hon. Gentleman who represented the Colonial Office in that House had given any reasons for the belief that there was anything in the Papers that were being prepared for presentation, he would have been ready to wait until those Papers were in their hands; but, after all the parade that had been made in the speeches of Members of the Government, and the statements that had been made through the Press, on the occasion of the visit of the Swazi Envoys to this country, that Lord Ripon had made some fresh, definite, and important reply to their representations, and that some conditions of value for their protection and security were to be inserted in our Convention with the Powers; it appeared from the statement just made, so far as the Under Secretary was willing to make any communication to the House, there was nothing fresh since the Convention of 1893, when the Government for the first time agreed to surrender the Swazis to Boer domination. It was against that Convention that these unfortunate people and every inhabitant of the land had been protesting. It was to protest against that very Organic Proclamation that the Swazi Envoys came to this country to lay their case before Her Majesty's Government. In the newspapers last November there appeared elaborate statements which apparently came from official sources. *The Times* published them as being official statements of the Colonial Office—that is to say, of the Under Secretary and of his chief, Lord Ripon. They are to the effect that the Envoys were told to go home for the very answer for which they had come 7,000 miles to this country. And what was the official answer? What were the provisions for their assured protection? What was to save them from the fate of all subject races who had been brought under Boer rule—from being practically enslaved and having their persons and property placed at the mercy of a people who could not be excelled in the history of the world for the inhumanity with which they treated subject races? There were speeches of President Kruger in which he boasted that the Boers would be able to deal as they pleased with the Swazis and with Swaziland. He asked the House to consider the claim the Swazis had upon us; and that claim was twofold. It was based upon honour and upon gratitude—gratitude for actual services rendered to the country, and honour because the pledged word of England had been given under successive Conventions to support their independence. The Swazis were a native people belonging to the finest race in South Africa —the Kaffirs. They had been for sixteen years the allies and friends of this country. They had fought side by side with our soldiers against Sekokuni. They sent help to us against Cetewayo. Though the Swazis, of Swaziland, were not actually engaged in that campaign, they held an important Laager on the Transvaal frontier, which was then British territory. There were Swazis fighting under Sir Evelyn Wood, but these, though of the same race, were settled at the time in Natal. They refused the invitation of the Boers in 1881 to join them against the English, and offered to help the British troops in their conflict with the Transvaal. In three solemn Treaties, to which the signature of Great Britain was affixed, the independence of Swaziland had been affirmed. By Article 24 of the Convention of 1881, the independence of Swaziland was affirmed. That affirmation had been repeated in Article 12 of the Treaty of 1884. Both these were made by a Radical Government, under the Premiership of the right hon. Member for Midlothian. In the third Convention, that of 1890, made by the late Conservative Government, these words occurred :—

> "The independence of the Swazis is affirmed, and no inroad on that independence shall be allowed, even with the consent of the Swazi Government, without the consent of both Her Majesty's Government and the Government of the South African Republic."

It was not until the deplorable and disgraceful Convention of 1893, one of the last acts of the Government of which the Member for Midlothian was chief, that a direct attack upon the independence of the Swazis was sanctioned. But even then it was laid down that the South African Republic would have to obtain a Convention or Organic Proclamation, conveying to them the rights of jurisdiction, protection, and administration over Swaziland, signed by the Swazis' Queen's Regent and Council, and that no such Organic Proclamation or Convention would be recognised by Her Majesty's Government unless they were satisfied that the Swazis understood its nature, terms, and conditions. In spite of this, it was understood that a Convention still more disgraceful than that of 1893 was signed last month by Sir Henry Loch at Volksrust, under the shadow of Majuba, by which the Swazis were directed to sign a Proclamation, handing themselves over to the Boers, and by which, if they failed to do so by next May, President Kruger and his commandos would be given *carte blanche* to deal with the Swazis as they pleased. It was impossible to conceive a more humiliating and disgraceful betrayal than that of the Swazis by Her Majesty's present Government. These unfortunate people, from the Queen's Regent down to the humblest member of the race, were determinedly opposed to annexation by the Boers. With regard to the promise alleged to have been made by Sir E. Wood, to protect the Swazis, his first statement implied that he never made any promise at all, but afterwards he modified that by saying that in his interview with the Swazi Council, he adhered strictly to the instructions he had received from Her Majesty's Government. Sir E. Wood did not say what they were, and the Swazis said he only read out to them the Convention of 1881. Sir E. Wood appealed to the record of the Convention existing at the Colonial Office. He had asked to be allowed to read it, and permission had been refused, and the document, although it was thus appealed to, had not been communicated to the House. One of the Blue Books furnished another curious piece of evidence. In 1887, the British Agent in the Transvaal wrote to Sir Theophilus Shepstone, in Natal, that the Swazi King had been told that if he was in difficulty he might rely on British assistance. That statement had been published for seven years, and had not been contradicted. Article 24 of the Convention of 1881 between this country and the Transvaal distinctly affirmed the independence of the Swazis. This was read out by Sir Evelyn Wood, representing the British Government, to the Swazi Council and people, and, even if he had not made further distinct promises, almost any people—much more unlettered people not accustomed to the byways of diplomacy, or the various shuffles by which responsibility was shirked — would be justified in concluding that a statement made by the Government of Great Britain and the Transvaal in solemn Convention was intended to be binding, and would be the basis of their protection in the future. Ever since that time the Swazi King and Council had acted as if they owed allegiance to this country, and believed that they were under the allegiance of Great Britain. The Convention of 1884 repeated the article of 1881, and the Convention of 1890 undoubtedly affirmed the independence of the Swazis. No serious attempt was made to deprive them of their independence until this miserable Convention of 1893, by which the British Government endeavoured to abandon the Swazis. Anything more distressing than the position of these unfortunate Swazis could not be imagined. In the portion of Swaziland transferred to the Boers in 1884 the Swazis had been so much persecuted and oppressed that there was hardly a Swazi who dared live there. The Boers attacked others, upon whom they imposed unjust taxation, with a force of 2,500, and war ensued, which was conducted with great barbarity. When the Swazis were subdued the Boers reduced them to slavery. The appeal of the Swazis to Her Majesty was one of the most pathetic documents he had ever seen. They implored Her Majesty to save them from the destruction which being handed over to the

Boers would mean for them, and they even asked Her Majesty if Great Britain could not take over their country to keep the Boers from entering it and destroying them. In the face of the claims of the Swazis upon our honour and gratitude, the Government were deliberately refusing, not merely to accept the allegiance of the Swazis, but trying to put them under compulsion to submit themselves to the accursed domination of the Boers, which they dreaded and detested. The Convention of 1881, as far as the protection of the natives went, had been absolutely a dead letter. The natives had enjoyed no protection, and the chiefs who had aided the natives had been persecuted and ruined, and many of their followers killed and their property destroyed. The Swazis said, with truth, that whatever verbal conditions were put in our agreements with the Boers for their protection would be worth nothing if once the Boers got the control of the country. He had brought the matter before the House because he thought the honour and interests of the country were involved. President Kruger, at a great banquet the other day at Pretoria, said the Transvaal Government intended to establish a seaport, and a Navy whose flag would fly among the Navies of the world, and the suzerainty of the Queen no longer existed. Yet the Convention of 1884 did not contain a single word abrogating the suzerainty of the Queen. While last Session the Under Secretary for the Colonies said, in reply to a question, that the suzerainty of the Queen still existed, President Kruger now publicly boasted that it no longer existed, and that, if Great Britain ventured to assert her Treaty rights, the Transvaal Government would have the protection of France and Germany. It might involve serious trouble, and even danger, to this country if we allowed the Boers to obtain a footing on the seaboard, because a time might arise when certain foreign Powers might not be unwilling to assist the Boers against us. He desired to say a few words as to the condition of things in the Transvaal. Last year, when he had brought this question before the House, he had been asked by the Colonial Minister whom he represented. He might say, in reply, that he represented all those who took an interest in the position of Englishmen in South Africa. Since he had spoken on the subject last year he had received an enormous number of communications from those who represented non-Boer inhabitants of the Transvaal, asking to press Her Majesty's Government on this question. The position of Englishmen in the Transvaal at the present moment was, he was happy to say, unique. It was the only place in which Englishmen were treated like felons and were refused the franchise and the right of public meeting. The Boers themselves only numbered some 14,000 or 15,000, while the Natives numbered 700,000, and the European non-Boer population 60,000, of whom about 35,000 or 40,000 were British-born subjects. It was the latter who had made the country what it was. It was their capital, their labour, and their enterprise which had been the cause of the present prosperity of the country, had developed its wonderful mining industry, and had thus turned a barren land into a flourishing one. Five-sixths of the revenue of the country was paid by the non-Boers, and it was to them that the Boers owed their surplus revenue of £1,000,000 per annum ,which they expended in advancing Boer interests. He wished to impress upon Her Majesty's Government that there was no hope of the disputes in the country being settled peacefully unless a change were brought about in the Boer policy. The Boers had passed a law which deprived non-Boers of all hope of obtaining the franchise, and therefore of having any voice in the imposition of the taxes which they were called upon to pay. By their action the Government were giving rise to a feeling among British born subjects in the Transvaal that they were being neglected. A Nonconformist clergyman of moderate views writing from the Transvaal, said :

> "It is just this execrable 'scuttle' policy which is alienating the minds and hearts of Englishmen. To sum up all, I say it just depends on how the Home Government act during the next few years whether we have an Imperial or Africander South Africa. Multitudes of Englishmen are wavering in their loyalty simply because they have ceased to believe that England still has it in her to act with a firm hand. There exists not the slightest faith in the foresight or patriotism of the Home Government. No value is attached to their professions or pledges. Pride in the old country is changing to disgust. Englishmen here will

> in time get all political rights. I am not so sure that they will get them *as* Englishmen. Apparently our Government prefer to lose some 70,000 to 100,000 subjects to the Crown, though if they had half the firmness of a French or German Government they would intervene, and not only keep these subjects, but recover with them the best and wealthiest of the South African States."

It was one of the greatest dangers of the time that we were alienating the affections of our fellow subjects in South Africa, and thus would dispose them to become Africanders rather than Imperialists. Last year a law had been passed depriving the non-Boers of the right of either free, public, or private meetings, and the Boer police were instructed to attack those present at such meetings if they refused to disperse. It was a significant fact that President Kruger had been endeavouring to make the Judges of the Transvaal subservient to the Executive; and, so serious was this, that Chief Justice Kotze protested in the strongest manner against the attempt. Our countrymen there knew full well that if the Judges of the Transvaal, the chief ones of whom were honest men, knew that if the Judges were put under the control of the Executive, there would be absolutely no justice for any Englishman in the country. A law was proposed last year that nobody who had taken part against the Boers in the struggle of 1881 should exercise jurisdiction in the country. That was only defeated by a majority of 1. If it had been passed, a great number of Magistrates would have been swept away. Another measure that was being proposed was to give to the Government of the Transvaal the right of compulsory exile, and this was chiefly aimed at the independent British Press in that country. The House would recognise how serious it would be if such a measure were to become law. In conclusion, he wished to call the attention of the House to certain statements lately made by President Kruger in his public speeches. The President's avowed intention to obtain a sea-port and establish a Navy had already been referred to. In a remarkable conversation with a gentleman named Rutherford, who had objected to the policy of the Transvaal Government in spending money in buying up certain concessions, the President said distinctly:—

> "You cannot have two masters: you cannot serve the Queen and me."

That was an audacious statement for him to make in regard to his Suzerain. But in his next speech, at the banquet given in honour of the German Emperor last month, the President said distinctly that the British Suzerainty no longer existed; that, since the Convention of 1884, it had ceased to exist; and, that now there only remained simple treaties between this country and the Transvaal. That was a still more audacious statement, and it called for immediate protest from Her Majesty's Government. He hoped that the House would hear that such statements had not been allowed to pass unnoticed, and, that Her Majesty's Government had made a distinct and emphatic protest in regard to them. Many very insulting things had also been said by President Kruger and his followers against our countrymen in the Transvaal, but he did not propose to trouble the House with them in detail. They were constantly being sent to him. While the condition of our people in large towns like Pretoria and Johannesburg was comparatively secure, it was very different with those who lived in outlying parts of the Republic. In those parts Englishmen had to submit to constant insults and affronts. He would only give one example. When Sir Henry Loch went to Pretoria to inquire into the subject of Commandeering, he was greeted by the British subjects there. That meeting was dispersed by the Boer police, and the Boers, when the meeting had been dispersed, said:—"We are quite ready for you. Next time we come, we will thrash you with sjamboks." That was not a pleasant thing for Englishmen to have to listen to. As a further illustration of the spirit of the Boer Government, he would mention that, whereas at Johannesburg not 5 per cent. of the population could speak the Boer language, a Ukase had been issued that the debates of the Municipal Council should be conducted in that language alone. Summing up the case, he would remind the House that all this injustice and this denial of constitutional rights was being inflicted upon our countrymen in South Africa by a people whom, 16 years ago, we saved from bankruptcy and massacre. When we took over the Transvaal in 1877, the Boers were absolutely at the mercy of the natives. They had been disastrously defeated by Sekukuni, and were being threatened by Cetywayo. They had only 2s. 6d. in the Treasury. We were rewarded for our intervention in their behalf by the rebellion of the Boers in 1881. The Conventions of that year and of 1884 had become entirely a dead letter in regard to native rights, and largely so in regard to the rights of British subjects, whom, he would remind the House, were murdered by the Boers in cold blood in 1881, while those who, at Pretoria and Potchefstroom, had resisted the rebellion were deprived of all their rights in the country. In view of these facts, the Boers to-day were behaving with the greatest injustice to our native allies and to our fellow-countrymen. They denied to the latter all constitutional rights, and all right of public meeting; they repudiated the Suzerainty to which they were pledged in 1881; and they threatened to call in the aid of other powers if Her Majesty's Government asserted its Suzerain power. Such a state of things was intolerable. If the Government possessed the smallest foresight, they would take steps to deal with this matter while most of the evils might yet be remedied by peaceful influence and the moral power of this country. Undoubtedly the British Government were now in a position, if only they would speak firmly, to enforce a statesmanlike policy on the Boer Government without force of arms. It was in the interests of our native allies in South Africa, and of our fellow-countrymen in the Transvaal, that he asked the House to bring pressure upon Her Majesty's Government in terms of the Amendment which he now had the honour to move.

Sir R. TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston) in supporting the Amendment said, the charge that was brought against the Government was that they were abandoning to the Boers a tribe who had been under their protection, and against their will. In the Session before last the Government promised the House of Commons that the rights of the natives should be protected in Swaziland. Possibly it might have been then said that the Boers had a right to establish a seaport on the coast and to make a railway joining the coast to the upland of the Transvaal, but it was stated that the rights of the natives should be protected, and that they should have a local autonomy which should preserve their lands and customs. They were not to be placed under the domination of the Boers without their consent. That consent had never been given, and pressure amounting to compulsion was being put upon them to enforce their acquiesence in Boer domination. The records of the House would show whether that were true or not. Had there not been agreements with the Swazis that their rights should be protected, and was there not proof that their dissent was not only being set aside, but was being compulsorily put down? How did the Government propose to escape from the dreadful accusations which this implied? Diplomatic statements, of course, were made from the Treasury Bench alluding to this Convention or that official Paper, but it was impossible for hon. Members, unless with Blue Books in their hands, to follow these official references. It was not by official references that these accusations should be answered, but by plain, straightforward English which everyone might understand. He hoped for the honour of England that the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies would be able to give such a reply, because unless these specific charges were replied to the Government must rest under what he must call a dreadful imputation. England all over the world had hitherto been the protector of the weak, the friend of the natives, and the helper of the helpless; she had never sacrificed the natives to her own countrymen, and much less should she sacrifice them to an alien domination. He did not call it a foreign domination, because he did not admit that the Boers were a foreign Power; but they were an alien Power, and according to latest accounts most disloyal to the sovereignty of England, if the words of their own President were to be trusted. Were we to make over our allies to these men? Were we not bound to consider the character of the Boers? He did not pretend to have personal knowledge of the Boers, as he had of the Swazis, but the Boers had yet to establish a character for treating the native tribes with justice. If we were making over our people to them we were bound to ascertain what their character was, and they could not disregard the fact that the Boers had been persistently and consistently accused of cruelty and inhumanity towards all the natives under their authority, and to those accusations they had never succeeded in replying. He knew that Her Majesty's Government would say that they were under no positive Treaty engagements, or any specific Convention or pledge in writing to protect the Swazis. Possibly there might be some ground for that contention, but when dealing with native tribes was a great Imperial Power like England to take refuge in such excuses as that? Our moral obligation was proved to the very hilt, over and over again, by a chain of evidence extending over many years. In such a case we ought not to hide ourselves behind the thinly-veiled excuse that there were no specific declarations which could not bear the test of a Judicial Tribunal. He believed that such Judicial Tribunals as we happily had in England would undoubtedly decide that—morally, at all events—such a claim had been established on behalf of the Swazis. There was a great difference, too, between the case of the Swazis and the case of the Transvaal natives. It was quite true that the natives of the Transvaal had been utterly sacrificed to the Boers, and that we had allowed them to be harried and plundered and subjected to all manner of physical violence; but there was, perhaps, this excuse: that these people lived in the uplands beyond the reach of the strong arm of England. When once we had scuttled from the Boers in 1881 and lowered the flag of England upon Boer territory, the claims of the natives of that territory were past praying for. But no such excuses would avail us here. The Swazis lived on the plains, and were within reach of the coast; they were entirely within the protecting power of England, and, morally speaking, we had undertaken to protect them. Nothing could be easier if we were so minded, and had a true sense of British honour, than to interfere on their behalf. What could be the reason for the Government thus holding back? There must be some motive at the back of it. They were entitled to ask the reason. Dare the Government state that reason? He believed they dared not. Of course every one knew what that reason was, though very few liked to say it openly, because it was so deeply discreditable to the Government.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: What is it?

SIR R. TEMPLE said he would adumbrate that reason. There were reasons connected with what was supposed to be Imperial policy in South Africa. He greatly sympathised with the Imperial ideas of the present Government of the Cape Colony, but if that Imperial Policy required the sacrifice of any body of native tribes, he must protest against it. He sympathized as much as any one with the acquisition of Matabeleland, and he believed that it had been justly and fairly carried out. Were we, for the sake of these things, to sacrifice the Swazis? He challenged the Government to explain why it was they were throwing the Swazis overboard. Every one knew it was done on account of certain tacit agreements, agreements that were of so serious a nature that they could not be committed to writing—on account of some tacit agreements in reference to South African Imperial policy. Was that true? Would the Government deny it? [Mr. S. BUXTON: Certainly.] If the hon. Gentleman would deny it specifically they would have gained one or two steps in the argument, and if the hon. Gentleman did deny it he further challenged him to say what conceivable reason, before man and Heaven, there was for the conduct of England towards the Swazis. The Swazis were a gallant people, they had done good service, they were industrious, they were not barbarous, they were rather to be called semi-civilised, they had a natural eloquence, to which no hon. Member could pretend: there was hardly a man in the House of Commons who could make off-hand a speech so well as one of the Swazis could make in his own language; they were a people worth conciliating, they had every possible claim upon the English, a claim we could not ignore, and it was sad to think that England was now deserting them in order to subserve some Imperial policy of its own. He earnestly hoped that the days of Boer domination and Boer insolence were numbered. A great English population was growing up in the Transvaal, for where there were 1,000 Boers there would before long be 10,000 Englishmen. One knew what the result of that would be. But, in the meantime, the poor English there were being oppressed; it was wonderful to think they submitted to the oppression. But, of course, they were engaged in such a lucrative industry, and an industry which had so many delicate complications connected with it, it was so critically important for them for the moment that they should keep the peace at any price, that once and away they were compelled to submit to that which Englishmen had never before submitted to, either at home or abroad. It was quite clear there was yet a Suzerainty of England over the Boers. The Boers admitted it in reference to Swaziland. They did not claim they could take Swaziland without our consent; but they claimed that we should compel the Swazis to consent. The House of Commons would do well to listen to the appeals now made, because it was quite clear that before long the Englishmen in the Transvaal would somehow, by force if necessary, establish their political privileges. In the day of their triumph they would remember who sympathised with them, and who did not. He hoped they would recollect that, all events, one great Party in the House were with them, that in one quarter of the House voices were raised on their behalf. He trusted they would be able to say voices were raised on their behalf in all quarters. He did not wish to involve the Government in any unpopularity with our countrymen in the Transvaal. He would rather every British Government was popular with our people abroad; but, at all events, if Her Majesty's Government would not take up their proper position it was the duty of the Opposition to do what they could to see that right was done. He was sure that, when the Englishmen in the Transvaal had established their proper *status* and position there, they would remember the help that was given to them in the days of their danger and adversity, and that that would render them willing to look to England as their *Alma Mater*, and willing to come under the Imperial sway of the British Queen and Empress.

*MR. SYDNEY BUXTON said, the hon. Member for Sheffield had dealt with the questions of the Transvaal and of Swaziland. He would first take the question of the Transvaal, which was quite separate in regard to substantial matters from that of Swaziland. He had no hesitation in admitting that the position of the European population in the Transvaal was to a large extent an invidious one, and was one that was entitled to due regard by any British Government. It was no part of his duty to defend the South African Republic in regard to internal administration. He could only regret, as a democrat and an Englishman, that the authorities of that country had thought fit to restrict their franchise in the extraordinary way in which it was restricted. He could only regret as an Englishman, also, and as one in favour of personal liberty, that they should only last year have further restricted the liberty of the subject, and as a Free Trader that they should have placed their trade and commerce under such a system of crushing monopolies. All he could say was that their ways were not ours. But in regard to these internal matters it was very difficult to know in what respect the hon. Member proposed that the Government should act. The matters to which the hon. Member referred were, after all, matters of internal administration; and a principle had been laid down very clearly and definitely by the late Government in a sentence, with which the present Government felt themselves in accord. It was written in February, 1890, with reference to a question regarding the internal affairs of the Transvaal, and whether the Imperial Government was practically entitled to interfere. This was the answer which Mr. W. H. Smith gave on that occasion—

> "The Convention of London, made in 1884, between Her Majesty and the South African Republic, contains no express reservation of the Queen's right of suzerainty, and although Her Majesty retains under the Convention the power of refusing to sanction treaties made by the South African Republic with foreign States and Nations and with certain native tribes, it is a cardinal principle of that settlement (and this is the point) that the internal government and legislation of the South African Republic shall not be interfered with."

That was the interpretation of the existing relations between England and the Transvaal, which, he thought, very clearly laid down the principles to guide our conduct in the matter. Though they might differ from the way in which the Transvaal carried out their principles of administration, he did not see that in existing circumstances the Government had the right to forcibly interfere with regard to these questions. If by means of friendly communications at any time, in regard to the Convention of 1884, or in other ways, they could improve or alleviate the lot of their fellow-subjects in the Transvaal, the Government would be glad to see something of the kind occur. He agreed largely with what the hon. Member said with reference to the question of the franchise. Though that franchise was unduly restricted, the hon. Member was not quite logical in his argument. The hon. Member argued that the wish of this large European population in the Transvaal was to remain British subjects, while at the same time they wanted all the restrictions removed. But he would point out to the hon. Member that the question of the franchise and the question of allegiance had been somewhat misunderstood, both by those who were seeking an extension of the franchise, and by those who were advocating the cause of British subjects. Having looked into the question as carefully as they could, the conclusion the Government had come to with regard to the local aspect of the matter was this, that the acceptance of the franchise would necessarily involve the acceptance of some oath of allegiance. But the English law did not permit dual allegiance. Apart from the law of the South African Republic, those subjects who took the oath of allegiance to the South African Republic would, *ipso facto*, lose their English citizenship. Therefore it was not competent for those who urged the extension of the franchise to also urge the argument that those persons could remain British subjects. He said, however, that every European in the Transvaal ought to have the option of obtaining the franchise and of accepting the oath of allegiance. But the proposals of the hon. Member involved practically the alienation of a certain number of British subjects, and to their ceasing to remain British subjects. He pointed out that, with regard to internal administration generally, the Government thought they had no right of active or forcible interference. But where any question arose of differential treatment between British and other subjects, or any question of a breach of the London Convention of 1884, they could interfere. They had interfered in the question, for instance, of commandeering. Again, the question which had been raised as to the tribe and its Chief Malaboch, mentioned by the hon. Member, had been carefully considered; because it appeared as though the question did involve a breach of certain clauses of the London Convention with regard to slavery. In looking into the matter, however, it was found that there was a precedent in the action of the Imperial Government with regard to what was done in 1878. With regard to the question of money, it was true that the terms were less now than in 1878. [Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: What about the breaking-up of families?] As far as he could gather from the Convention, there was no difference with regard to that subject. It was not intended under the law of the tribe to break up the families. The question, however, was one of administration, and, as regarded the principle, the Government came to the conclusion that they had no right of interference. As to the foreign relations of the South African Republic, something had been said about President Kruger, and the hon. Member wanted to know whether the Government had made any protest with reference to the language which had been used by him. The hon. Member would agree that before making any protest with regard to a man's language it was desirable first of all to know what had been said; and, as the report of the statement came by telegraph, it would be better to wait and see the text of what was really said. But he was prepared to say at once, that, as regards Article IV. of the London Convention—under which the foreign relations of the South African Republic were regulated—the Imperial Government considered that the South African Republic was distinctly within the sphere of British influence in regard to its foreign relations, and it was not competent for it to make any treaties, engagements, or arrangements with other foreign Powers without their being first submitted to the Imperial Government for approval. He denied that the hon. Member had any authority to say that the Government was not as fully alive to the position of British subjects in the South African Republic as any Government could be, or that they were not as anxious to improve their position as any previous Government had ever been. The hon. Member said that he was in communication with a large number of persons in the Transvaal, and that he represented the large demand of public opinion out there. That might be the case, but the European population in the Transvaal did not consider that the hon. Member gave expression to their views, or that he was in agreement with them as to the way in which the question should be dealt with. As far as he could judge from the independent Press of the South African Republic, the hon. Member did not represent the general views of the English population there. The information the Government had received in regard to this matter was not that they desired that the Imperial Government should actively intervene in their internal affairs; they desired that the Government should give them a friendly support when opportunity served, which we shall always be ready to do. They must abide by their treaty engagements and the arrangements of previous Governments, and he could assure the House that they would not fail in taking any legitimate steps to improve the position of British subjects in the Transvaal or in other parts of South Africa. Now, he turned to Swaziland, and he feared he must deal with that question with some detail, as it involved a historical survey of the position, He was glad to find that in the House the hon. Member did not repeat the tittle-tattle in which he indulged in the Press and elsewhere with regard to the Colonial Office and the deputation. All he could say was that the story about the Queen's message and about the deputation being hurried away had not a shadow of foundation. It was a mare's nest, and he repeated that he was glad the hon. Member had not reiterated his fictions in the House. The Colonial Office was very sorry for those poor men, coming all the way from Africa; for we knew exactly what they had to say, and they said nothing new. It was not the fault of the Government that they came at all. As regarded the message they brought they received an absolute and complete answer. The only message they brought was to offer their allegiance to the Queen of England. That allegiance England was not entitled, under treaty obligations, to accept. The hon. Member shook his head. He hoped he would admit that the Government did their best to give the deputation a full and fair hearing.

SIR E. ASHMEAD - BARTLETT asked that the hon. Member should read the petition of the Queen Regent and the Council of Swaziland, in which it was stated that, if their allegiance could not be accepted, they hoped that their independence would be accepted.

MR. BUXTON said, that petition was not brought by the deputation, but was written over here for them. Then it was said that the Swazis had a claim that the honour of England was pledged as to their independence, and that on the ground of gratitude they should allow this Convention to be carried out. He had no desire to minimise any claim which the Swazis might have on the Imperial Government, but their claims should not be exaggerated. The hon. Member said the Swazis were twice their allies, and once offered their services. As to the Boer war no such offer was made at all. As to the Zulu war it was also untrue to say that they were in any sense their allies when that war was going on. Captain M'Leod confirmed that, and the difficulty was not to get them as allies, but to prevent them siding with the Zulus. After Cetewayo's defeat they did look after the borders, but that was all. As regards the Secocoeni campaign, they were, he fully admitted, our gallant allies. But it must be remembered that Secocoeni was one of the most threatening dangers which the Swazis had lived under for years; and, therefore, when they came forward as allies it was their own cause the Swazis were fighting for. They recognised that the British Government was coming forward to give them peace. It was the Swazis who gained more than the British Government from the result of that war. At the same time the Swazis were their allies, and they had some claims to their consideration. He repeated that the Government had given the greatest possible consideration to their claims, and they had done — they believed they had done—what was, under the circumstances of the case, the best to preserve for the Swazis what they had left for them. No one reading the Conventions of 1881, 1884, and 1890, and bearing in mind the circumstances of the time, could believe for a moment that England had guaranteed the independence of Swaziland to the Swazis. The interpretation of the clauses referred to was that they recognised that the question of Swaziland was one of mutual concern, and that neither party to the Convention could intervene forcibly in Swaziland without the assent of the other. It is quite certain that the Boers, claiming as they did Swaziland, would never have assented to an "independence" greater than this. Moreover, the Conventions expressly invalidate "independence," by providing for interference by the two countries if they mutually agree. And, as a matter of fact, of course, the independence of the Swazis has been already infringed and practically destroyed by the mutual intervention of England and the Transvaal. Even if it were true that England and the South African Republic had guaranteed the independence of the Swazis, the Swazis had so bartered away all that was of value in land, minerals, and administration, that they had absolutely destroyed any probability of maintaining their independence. The independence which the Government desired to maintain was tribal independence, and he thought they had been successful in maintaining that. That was the full extent of independence which under the circumstances and in consequence of their actions the Swazis could claim, and so far Her Majesty's Government desired to proceed. The hon. Member for Kingston asked why the Government dealt with this matter at all, and he thought there was some underhand intention of handing the Swazis over to the Boers—that the Government were actuated by some nefarious purpose in the matter. He would assure the hon. Member, as regarded the late Government no less than the present Government, that whilst, of course, Imperial questions must always be dealt with on Imperial lines, there had been no intention, no desire of any kind, to sacrifice the Swazis for any Imperial purpose. He was bound to point out to the House that the present Government had not wantonly raised this question. It was entered upon by them only because they found when they came into Office two and a-half years ago that the matter had been dealt with by previous Governments and was still pending, and they proceeded to deal with it on the same lines. Both hon. Members who had spoken on this matter seemed to think that the South African Republic practically had no rights or interests in Swaziland, and as if England could have dealt with the matter irrespective of that Republic. But they could hardly have been aware that our Treaty obligations prevented our annexing Swaziland or even declaring a Protectorate over the country. They were, in fact, under a misapprehenslon as to the position of the Boers in regard to the country. The Boers had been in possession of it for some time under a system of joint government, had spent many thousands of pounds in it, and had practically got all of what was of any value in the country. The Boers, therefore, had considerable interests in Swaziland, while the Imperial Government had none at all, except to see that native rights were properly protected. The question of Swaziland first arose in 1881, when the Transvaal was handed back to the Boers. The Boers then claimed sovereignty over the country, but Her Majesty's Government of that day resisted the claim, and, in order to show that the question was one of mutual arrangement, the Government entered into the clause in the Convention of 1881. While the Imperial Government had never claimed an actual right of Protectorate or annexation of Swaziland, they had, ever since the question arose, acted conjointly with the South African Republic. That went on until 1889. He would here point out to hon. Members that the present position of this question was not due to the action of one Government, but to the policy pursued by three successive Governments. Between 1884 and 1889 England remained apathetic in the matter, and during that interval graziers, concession seekers and other European speculators entered the country and secured from King and chiefs all that was of value in it. So that while in 1884 Swaziland was practically unknown and unoccupied, by 1887 or 1888 it had become the happy hunting ground of graziers, concession seekers, and others, and was rapidly falling into a state of disorder and anarchy. The position became so bad that in 1887 the High Commissioner, Sir H. Robinson, recommended to the Government that the only solution of the difficulty was to place the administration of the country wholly under the care of the Transvaal. But nothing was done under that recommendation; the matter was allowed to slide. It got worse and worse, and by 1889 the position had become so intolerable that Sir Francis de Winton was sent out to enquire, jointly with an officer of the South African Republic, into the matter. Sir Francis recommended that the South African Republic, should be encouraged to take over the government of the country as far as possible; and meanwhile he set up provisionally, as a result, a Tripartite Government. It was then proposed by the English Government to continue this system at least for three years. The Republic strenuously objected to this arrangement, and the position became so difficult that the Government of the day authorised Mr. Hofmeyr to communicate with the Transvaal Government to see whether some arrangement could not be brought about between the Republic and England. The result was that the negotiations were only carried through on the understanding, as stated in Mr. Hofmeyr's letter of July 17, 1890, to the State Secretary of the Transvaal, that—

> "Her Majesty's Government will be prepared, when the joint Government in Swaziland has been established and the concession claims have been settled, to consider such questions as the Government of the South African Republic may bring before it, with the desire to meet the wishes of the South African Republic as far as possible."

The Volksraad assented to the arrangement on this understanding, and that the arrangement was a purely temporary one. In the next year occurred the great trek to Mashonaland, which threatened to jeopardise our possessions in that country. The Government of the day put great pressure on President Kruger to prevent the trek, and, in this connection, the Secretary for the Colonies, Lord Knutsford, telegraphed in May, 1891, to the High Commissioner that—

> "If the trek is stopped Her Majesty's Government will not refuse discussion as to Swaziland sooner than the time originally understood."

Sir H. Loch reported on June 17 that the trek had been stopped; and that under such circumstances earlier and greater consideration would be given by Her Majesty's Government to the Swaziland question, in order, as far as possible, to meet the wishes of the Republic in the matter. As to what these wishes were there was no concealment. Dr. Leyds, the State Secretary, in a letter to the High Commissioner on March 12th, 1891, after detailing the history of the case added—

> "The course of events and of the before going negotiations and discussions have all led up to cause not only the Government of this Republic, but the whole of South Africa to expect a solution of this Swaziland question favourable to the Republic. The Government over Swaziland, such as is now in force as a measure of transition, urgently requires alteration by the addition of Swaziland to the Republic."

And it was after this deliberation that the late Governor arranged that Sir H. Loch should meet President Kruger to settle the future of Swaziland. Therefore, the position when the present Government came into office was that a promise had been made to discuss the question with the view of meeting the views of the South African Republic as far as possible. They found that the three years' Convention was of a preferredly temporary character, and was rapidly running out; and they knew that it could not be renewed because the Republic intended to denounce it. It was absolutely essential, however, that some form of civil government should be introduced into the country, and, according to the pledges which had been given, it was fully understood by the Government of the South African Republic that under any new system introduced, their influence would be very largely extended in Swaziland. At all events the Boers claimed further rights in the country, and it should be pointed out that, geographically speaking, while Swaziland was surrounded on three sides by the Transvaal it was almost inaccessible to our troops or power. The Government found also that if they took over the administration of Swaziland they would have had to pay the whole cost of its administration, without any power of developing the country; all the revenues belonging already to the South African Republic; and everything else of value to concessionaires. Thus, without being able to do anything for the country, they would have run the risk of causing great friction between the South African Republic and England. The Government had to recognise the logic of events and to make the best of what he might perhaps call "a bad job," and it was thought better, in the circumstances, to allow the South African Republic to publicly retain what they already practically possessed, but without actually allowing incorporation into the Republic. The Government had, at the same time, to consider how they could best safeguard the rights of the whites and guarantee the tribal rights of the Swazis, and they believed that under the Convention of 1893 they had attained those objects. With regard to the whites, they had obtained full protection for personal and proprietary rights. They had also provided that the whites could at once become burghers of the South African Republic, and they had provided against the enlargement of the Customs duties. With regard to the Swazis, they had secured that their king should remain their paramount Chief, and that their laws and customs and rights of inheritance and succession should be respected. The Swazis were also to continue in possession of all land grazing and agricultural rights of which they had not already divested themselves. The Government, looking to the fact that our interests in the country were very small, and that those of the South African Republic were large and increasing, and taking into account the pledges by which they were bound, he asserted that the Government had really little choice in the matter, but they had done the best they could in obtaining the guarantees to which he had referred for the tribal independence of the Swazis. The Government hoped that the Swazis, who they thought had been ill-advised, might still be induced to agree to the proposals that had been made. The Government had done their best to secure for the Swazis what independence was left to them, and to preserve the rights which they themselves had not bartered away. He believed that the arrangement which had been made, if agreed to by the Swazis, would benefit them, the whites, and the whole South African Republic. It had been said that one consequence of the arrangement would be to bring the Boers nearer to the sea, but he was of opinion that by the Convention of 1893 we should keep the Boers really further from the sea. They could have approached nearer to it under the Convention of 1890, which was negotiated by the Government of which the hon. Member on the Front Bench opposite was such a distinguished feature, because, under that Convention, the South African Republic had the right of making a railway to the east coast. Under the Convention negotiated by the present Government, that right was not continued, and disappeared. Further, the hill territories lying between Swaziland and the sea were distinctly within our sphere of interest, and would, he thought, before long be brought more directly under British control. The result, therefore, of the Convention of 1893 was that our naval and military position was stronger than before. He denied emphatically that there was any truth in the suggestion of the hon. Member for the Kingston Division that the Swazis had been betrayed for a material or political gain. In all these South African questions it was absolutely necessary to take into account the opinion of those living in South Africa, and it would be ridiculous if, in considering questions affecting Swaziland and the Transvaal no regard were paid to the opinion of the South African Republic. On the subject of Swaziland that opinion was unanimous, and this, as he had indicated, the Government were bound to take into account. At the same time they had striven to do what they could for the Swazis.

SIR J. E. GORST (Cambridge University) thought that the Under-Secretary for the Colonies must be conscious that the story which he had just unfolded was a very sad one. One felt a little ashamed when one considered the treatment which in these modern times a civilised Government meted out to native races that trusted in its honour and looked to it for protection. The hon. Member had tried to minimize the obligations which we owed to the Swazis, and with that object had made little of the services rendered by the Swazis in the

Zulu war. But that war was brought to a termination by the capture of Cetewayo, and the Swazis, by impeding his retreat, practically threw him into our hands. In those days they could hardly have rendered a more important and effective service to the British Empire. It was clear that the Swazis for a considerable number of years were under the impression that their independence was guaranteed by the British Power. The Convention of 1884 declared that the independence of the Swazis within the boundaries of Swaziland would be "fully recognised," and the Article of the Convention of 1890 was still stronger, because it said—

> "The independence of Swaziland as recognised by the Convention of 1894 is confirmed, and no inroad on that independence shall be allowed, even with the consent of the Swazi Government, without the consent of Her Majesty's Government and the Government of the South African Republic."

When terms of that kind were put into a convention, he did not think the Government should turn round and say that these people had no right to suppose that England had guaranteed their independence. If, when they were told that the two Powers had put such strong words into a convention made between them, the Swazi Government came to the conclusion that their independence had been guaranteed by Great Britain, we could not be very much astonished. His position was this—that the Swazis having rendered great services to our forces, having been in alliance with us, not unreasonably came to the conclusion that they could look to us for the maintenance of their independence. But then came a sad story. When these Swazis became of no value to us, then the protection and support of their independence became inconvenient, and we found out that we had not guaranteed their independence, that they had no right to look to us as supporters, and we gradually dropped them in the most humane way we could. Such a course of policy as that he considered discreditable to our civilization. In dealing with a people of this kind, the Government should be a little more careful as to the expectations they raised and the pledges they were supposed to give, and, perhaps, a little more scrupulous in afterwards sticking to those pledges and in not allowing any people to think that they have been thrown over and abandoned by a Government they had trusted. In every one of the despatches, telegrams, and public utterances the Under-Secretary had read to the House, words were contained to the effect that the Government would meet the wishes of the South African Republic as far as possible. He would have thought that "as far as possible" might not unreasonably be interpreted to mean "as far as the honour and credit of the country and the engagement the Swazis supposed we had entered into would allow"; and he could not see in the various documents referred to anything which would pledge Her Majesty's Government to the entire abandonment of these people if they chose to adhere to their independence. The Swazis appeared desirous of maintaining their independence, and although conventions had been entered into with the South African Republic, he did not understand that Her Majesty's Government had as yet gone so far as entirely to abandon them. Tribal independence appeared at least to be secured to them, and that might practically mean a real and virtual independence. He did not wish to say a single word about the South African Republic which might be injurious to the action which Her Majesty's Government were taking; but he did not think that England had any right to hand over to other people obligations she had taken upon herself. If the South African Republic were famed throughout the whole world for its treatment of native races, he did not think Her Majesty's Government had any right to wash their hands of the obligations entered into by this country. It seemed to him perfectly clear, after listening to the speech of the Under Secretary and the quotations he had made from previous Governments—Governments of which he had had the honour of being a Member—that the whole matter substantially resolved itself into this, that while we were very glad to accept the alliance of the Swazis when it was valuable to ourselves, we entered into an undertaking on that occasion to protect them and to preserve their virtual independence. In his opinion that was an undertaking which any British Government ought to carry out.

DR. CLARK (Caithness) said, that

the speech they had just listened to did require one or two words in reply; otherwise he would not have taken part in the Debate. The right hon. Gentleman told the House that the Government of which he was a Member was so dishonourable as, after making an alliance with a people, when that alliance ceased to be valuable, to repudiate it and pitch them overboard. That would be very disgraceful on the part of any country; but England never, at any time, entered into an alliance with the Swazi people. The facts of the case were simply these: Up to 1871, when England annexed the Transvaal, Swaziland was as much a portion of the Transvaal as Kent was a portion of England. During the time that we held the Transvaal the Swazis were governed by us, as inhabitants of the Transvaal, and in 1881, when we handed over the Transvaal to the Dutch Settlers, a Convention was made, and by that Convention Swaziland was for the first time separated from the Transvaal. A Commission was appointed, and the original proposal made on behalf of the British Government was that the extent of the Transvaal should be limited to that territory where white men had their farms, and that a large district, West and North, should be cut off altogether from it. Matters were fully discussed, and a compromise was arranged that both Bechuanaland and Swaziland should be excluded from the Transvaal State, because there were no white men in those territories. The experiment was tried from 1881 to 1884, unfortunately as far as Bechuanaland was concerned, for wars began there. In 1885 a Scotchman went to Swaziland and obtained from the King a Concession by which he maintained the whole of the mineral rights were given over to him. Shortly after, the King began to grant other concessions, and nearly every right of every kind was handed over to Concessionaires. He spent three days in urging the King to grant no concessions, pointing out to him that he had a unique chance of showing what a Native race could do in South Africa. He attempted to effect an arrangement between the Transvaal and the Swazi King, under which no White men should obtain privileges in Swaziland. The Transvaal Government did all they could to prevent White men getting concessions, and nine-tenths of all the concessions were obtained by British subjects. It was hardly fair to say that the Swazis assisted us because of the iniquities perpetrated upon them by Sekokuni, because he was never powerful enough to attack the Swazis, and there was a considerable distance between the two tribes. When the war began in 1876 between Sekokuni and the then Transvaal Government, the Swazis acted as allies to the Boers, and aided them in defeating Sekokuni. When a Conservative Government was in power Sir Henry Barkly and Lord Carnarvon wrote strong despatches protesting against one Native Tribe being used in war with another Native tribe; and yet two years after, when we took over the Transvaal, the very thing occurred against which we had so strongly protested; we brought the Swazis to our aid in crushing Sekokuni. The only arrangement made was between the British Government and the Transvaal Government, and it was that both would respect the independence of Swaziland and neither would take it over. The Transvaal wanted it because they said that we had taken over Bechuanaland. He did not understand exactly what it was we were going to do now. We were going, it was said, to protect the rights of the Whites; but no White man had any right at all in Swaziland. In obtaining concessions from the King, resort had been had to such practices as turning 9 years into 99 and 3 into 30, and no consideration, except perhaps some champagne, had been given for the concessions.

MR. S. BUXTON explained that the rights and concessions to be upheld were those settled by the Convention of 1890.

DR. CLARK maintained that there were rights that we were bound to uphold; there were no rights we ought to respect but those of the Swazis. He did not know what was meant by protecting tribal rights. The greatest rights of all were those of the people to their lands; their grazing lands and mealy lands—and the waters by which they were irrigated. He did not admit that Europeans in the Transvaal were in a perilous position, and he maintained that we had no more right to interfere in the Transvaal than we had to interfere with the Government of the United States of

America. Foreigners went into the Transvaal of their own accord, and they must obey the law. There were two Chambers, and the qualification for voters and members was higher in the case of the Second Chamber than in that of the First. The hon. Member for Sheffield had settled in this country and had been able to enter the House of Commons; but probably in no period of time could he become a Member of the other House. The same men could not be citizens of the Transvaal and British citizens at the same time. The bulk of the people were content with the Government, and life and property were as safe as in the British Colonies. Nothing could be more contemptible than the hypocrisy of the complaints about the system of apprenticeship which prevailed in South Africa. He did not like it himself, and admitted that it was a bad system, but when we had the Transvaal, there were ten times as many apprentices in it than there had been during the time the Boers held the country.

Sir E. ASHMEAD BARTLETT desired to explain that the hon. Member had misrepresented what he had said, which was that apprenticeship under the British rule was genuine apprenticeship, whilst under the Boers it was practically slavery.

Mr. ARNOLD FORSTER (Belfast, W.) said it would be interesting to know in what capacity the hon. Member for Caithness spoke, and whether it was as the representative of a not always friendly Power.

Dr. CLARK said, he had nothing at all to do with the Transvaal Government. For some years he represented them as an honorary officer. That was when the country was poor and weak, but when it became rich he told the Government they had better appoint a paid officer. He never got a shilling from them. He merely acted for them because they were poor and badly used; and he was proud of having done so.

Mr. ARNOLD FORSTER said, that all he meant to suggest was, that the hon. Member, having represented a foreign nation at a time when it was at war with this country, he would naturally have a sympathy which would influence the expression of his views and affect the value to be attached to them. He was personally reluctant to take part in the Debate until he had heard the Under Secretary, whose speech it might have been expected would have been a reply to that of the hon. Member for Sheffield. The speech of the Under Secretary for the Colonies could not by any stretch of imagination be considered a reply, either in form or in substance, to the speech of the hon. Member for Sheffield. His hon. Friend (Sir E. Ashmead-Bartlett) dealt with two points—that a series of laws were being passed by the Transvaal Republic which were specifically directed against British subjects. The hon. Member for Caithness said the Transvaal Government were only doing what was done in the United States. That was inaccurate, because one had only to go over to New York and register himself as belonging to one Party or the other and he would obtain the rights of citizenship next day. There was no parallel between the condition of things in the Transvaal and in the United States. It was notorious that those who were not burghers in the Transvaal far outnumbered those who were, and that the laws he had referred to were being passed with the direct object of putting obstacles in the way of the enterprise and just claims of British subjects. He was aware that it was not our business to interfere with the internal administration of another State, but if deliberate insults were offered to British subjects because they welcomed their own representative in the town in which they lived they should be resented. The Under Secretary for the Colonies had overlooked the pith and kernel of the whole matter. Let hon. Members look at the map, and they would see what would happen if the Boers got into possession of Swazi territory. They would be within 30 or 40 miles of St. Lucia Bay, and there were at least two foreign Powers who, if they could get anchorage there, would consider they had obtained a great acquisition. We were now, by our own act, putting the Boers on the sea, and the moment they were within 30 or 40 miles of St. Lucia Bay they would be in a position to say to France and Germany: "Come, put up your flag here." In that event we should be face to face, not with the Transvaal Government or Swaziland Conventions, but with great civilised European Powers, who would say: "We are here by your own act, accepting from a people who have renounced your suzerainty, territorial rights and sovereignty over a portion of South Africa." It was upon the recommendation of Mr. Cecil Rhodes, Chairman of the British South Africa Company and Premier of Cape Colony, that the High Commissioner in South Africa recommended that the Boer trek to the north-west of the Transvaal should be stopped. It was enormously to the interest of the Chartered Company that this should be done, and a state of things unparaleled in the history of this great Empire—that the High Commissioner, who was absolutely all-powerful over the whole of British South Africa, outside the self-governing Colonies, should have as his adviser a man who had a vast pecuniary interest in the disposal of land outside Cape Colony. While he admired Mr. Rhodes and the operations of the Chartered Company, he submitted that the position of Sir H. Loch was one that no servant of the Crown should be in. If Lord Lawrence, immediately after the subjugation of the Punjab, had floated a Company for the disposal of land in the Punjab, what would public opinion have been? The position of our High Commissioner in South Africa was one that it was impossible for us to regard with equanimity. The bargain seemed to have been made that, as a *quid pro quo* for the stopping of the Boer trek, the obligations of this country towards the Swazis would be set aside, and the Swazis handed over to the Boers. The House knew what the fate of the Swazis would be directly they were handed over to the Boer Republic—a Republic, the whole able-bodied population of which was only 15,000—and which was powerless to harm us if we held our own in South Africa, but capable of infinite harm to the Swazis if we gave the Boers power over them.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON asked leave of the House to make an explanation. If his hon. Friend would refer to the Convention of 1890 he would see that the three-miles railway and the ten-miles radius to Amatongaland was intended to form a portion of the South African Republic, and that the sovereignty over the three-miles railway and even the ten-miles radius was given specifically to that Republic. As far as the Transvaal was concerned, it would be seen, therefore, that they would be not nearer, but a good deal further from the sea than they were before.

The Amendment was, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke) rose to call attention to the depressed condition of Trade and Agriculture, and to move the following Amendment:—

> To add at the end of the Address the words, "That we humbly represent to Your Majesty that we view with the greatest apprehension the disastrous condition of the Agricultural Interest and the prolonged depression of the Textile and other Industries, and the consequent increase in the number of the Unemployed; and we humbly express our regret that Your Majesty's Ministers have shown no appreciation of the extreme gravity of the present situation."

In his opinion, Her Majesty's Government ought to have made some proposal for remedying the state of things that existed with regard to this very important subject. Not only were the effects of the depression very severely felt by Farmer and Landowner, but a great deal of land had gone out of cultivation in consequence of that depression, and, unless some steps were taken to prevent it, still more of the land would go out of cultivation in the future, with the result that an enormous number of people would be thrown out of employment. The acreage of wheat had been decreasing year by year, with the result that within the period of a single generation that acreage had fallen from over 4,000,000 to below 2,000,000. That was a sufficient answer to those who urged that if wheat growing in this country did not pay our farmers ought to leave off growing that description of corn. Then, again, the numbers of cattle and of sheep in this country were decreasing very rapidly—in fact, in the case of the latter, by millions a year. This subject was a matter of the greatest importance, not only to those who produced food, but to the people who consumed it. If we were unfortunate enough to become engaged in a war, what would be the consequence to our people, who would then find out how foolish they had been in not taking steps to prevent Agriculture from dying out in this country? He should like to lay before the House his view as to what were the real causes of agricultural depression. The first cause was that corn, cattle, and sheep could be produced so much cheaper in new countries, where the land was free from the excessive burdens it had to bear in this country and which rendered it impossible for agricultural produce to be grown at remunerative prices. In order to bring this matter into a clear light, he would show the relative amount of taxes and other charges paid by realty as compared with personalty in this country. In the case of farms that were owned and occupied by the same persons the average amount of tithe paid was 3s. 6d. in the £, the land tax amounted to 9d., the rates to 2s. 6d., the Income Tax under Schedule A to 8d., and under Schedule B to 3d., while the Death Duties on a yearly average would amount to 1s. 9d., making a total of 9s. 5d. in the £. The amount paid by personalty was far less. Comparing what realty has to pay with what personalty has to pay, there was an excess of 7s. in the £1 in favour of personalty, upon which latter the Death Duties and Income Tax only amounted to 2s. 5d. in the £1. This sum was, in his view, one of the main reasons why land could not be cultivated to advantage at the present time. It was a most unfair thing that land without any buildings upon it should have to pay rates for such purposes as school boards, sanitation, and even for lighting. Rates were intended for the benefit of occupiers of houses, and he would go so far as to say that, in his opinion, a great deal of the agricultural land of this country should be altogether free from such rates. He would give, as a concrete case, a farmer holding 400 acres at the low rental of 10s. an acre, who would have to pay at the rate of 2s. 6d. in the £1 in rates alone, which would amount to £25 a year; and he would compare him with a small shopkeeper or professional man earning the same income in the same village or town. The latter would probably live in a house rated at about £24 a year, and he would have to pay in rates 24 times 2s. 6d., equal to £3 a year only. This farmer and professional man, living side by side, would have to pay in the one case £25, and in the other only £3 a year in rates. Surely that was a most unfair state of things, and one which required some redress at the hands of the Government. The sooner that the country was made aware of the great difference which existed between occupiers of land and occupiers of houses, in regard to rating, the better it would be for the agriculturists and for the country at large. He was sometimes told that it was a matter of small consequence in many cases, as the difference only amounted to a shilling or two per acre; but he would point out that there was a great deal of land to which that difference involved the question whether the land as such should be kept in cultivation or should be allowed to go out of cultivation. He contended that the rates should be readjusted. He believed that many hon. Members on the Government side would agree that agricultural land was overburdened with these rates, and that the sooner its occupiers were put on an equality with the occupiers of houses, the better it would be for the country. In addition to the matters which he had already mentioned, he would point out that, not only did the occupier of land now pay these rates, but since the Act of last year the owner of the land had also to pay increased Death Duties. Surely, then, before death the owners of real and personal property should be placed upon the same footing. He was aware that it would be difficult to get at personal property in order to rate it; but he urged that, at all events, the rates on land should be reduced, and then the country would find out a mode of getting the rates out of the occupiers of houses. The whole assessment should be reduced as the Board of Trade advised that it should be. As to the remedies, he would like local taxation to be so reduced as to considerably diminish the amounts collected from agricultural land. This was his chief point. Next he contended that where the land tax was collected in the county—and this tax still amounted in the aggregate to £2,000,000 a year—it ought to be applied to county purposes. Why should that money come up here and be put into the Imperial Exchequer? Why should it not be given to local authorities to spend on local rural matters? Another remedy was to be found in the redemption of tithe. Why should such an immense burden as that rest upon the land in these days? Why should not a sum of money be advanced, by the use of public credit, as in the case of Ireland, to the owners of land in order to enable them to redeem the tithes at a fair rate? He did not wish to say much about the proposal as to light railways until he had seen the Bill, but he protested that none of the cost of construction or maintenance should fall upon the counties in which those railways were to be made. If the Government proposed to lay the burden of them upon the local rates they would indeed be giving a stone when bread was asked for, and the last state would be worse than the first. Something might also be done by putting the Adulteration Acts more into force. The Government should take over the administration of those Acts, and should appoint their own inspectors. They would thus confer a benefit not merely upon the agriculturists, but upon the inhabitants of the Metropolis and other large towns. He had brought forward these arguments in the interests of the agriculturists as well as in the interests of the thousands of poor people who were thrown out of employment through land going out of cultivation. Whereas 100 acres of land in cultivation gave employment to three or four men and a team of horses, when it went out of cultivation no horses were required, and one man was sufficient to look after it. If the present unfortunate state of things were to go on, people would continue to be driven out of the rural districts to swell the numbers of the unemployed in our large towns; and, if for no other reason than that, hon. Members should concur in endeavouring to preserve and improve the agricultural industries of the country. They deeply deplored that no mention had been made of the prolonged depression in the Textile and other Industries in Her Majesty's Speech. Capital, it seemed, was hoarded up owing to the want of confidence prevailing, or was going out of the country, and this caused a great many people to be thrown out of employment. He therefore confidently appealed to the House not to make this a Party question. He concluded by moving the Amendment.

Mr. J. L. WHARTON (Yorkshire, Ripon) seconded the Amendment. He said the present depression of our Agriculture had not been known before within the memory of man. He entirely agreed with the remedies which his hon. Friend had suggested, because, although the lessening of the burden of local taxation and a readjustment of assessment would in many parts of England be but a flea-bite in dealing with agricultural depression, even a small amount of relief would, perhaps, enable the Farmer to live, whereas now he was on the point of bankruptcy. Last year, he believed, satisfaction had been expressed at the fact that Labourers' wages were being maintained although Landlords and Tenants might be suffering. But if no improvement in the present state of affairs took place there would be a rapid drop in Labourers' wages, and the Government would be wise if they adopted some remedy in time. He recollected that the Chancellor of the Exchequer told them last year that they were to have the Parish Councils Bill and asked what they could want more. He was not inclined to under-rate the value of that measure, but, at any rate, the establishment of Parish Councils would not effect a lessening of the rates, nor could it be regarded as a panacea for the depression in Agriculture. Indeed, the original cost of the elections of those Councils was no small item on the rates at the present time. Then, again, the effect of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Budget could not be looked upon as a cure for this depression, but in many cases as the reverse. He was very glad that the Government had seen their way to bring in a Bill in regard to the establishment of light railways. He suggested that the term cheap railways should, however, be used, because the general idea of light railways was that they were lines of narrow gauge and light carriage. If they were to have cheap railways which were to be workable, and a benefit to the country, they must have railways on the ordinary gauge, with ordinary trucks constructed in a cheap way. What was absolutely necessary in such undertakings was that they should have some modification of the present requirements of the Board of Trade with regard to platforms, signalling, and all the other costly precautions which now accompanied the working of a line. He did not think he was overstating the case when he said that at present an ordinary light railway cost something like £13,000 a mile. Any such line as that in an agricultural district would be ridiculous. Indeed, if they were to make a cheap railway such as would meet the case it should not, he thought, cost more than £3,000 a mile. Such a railway would have to be made more on a French than an English model. He believed the agricultural population would readily assent to do away with the present costly requirements of railway travelling. He would never believe for a moment that the Government would make such a foolish suggestion as that there should be a system of these cheap railways paid for out of the rates. The cost of those railways thrown on to the rates would entirely overshadow any benefit which might accrue from them to Agriculture. A great diminution of speed would of course be necessary, and he would suggest that in the country the rate of speed should not exceed ten or twelve miles an hour. He thought these lines should be put as far as possible in the hands of the great Companies, under an agreement with the Board of Trade as to their working. But these lines could not be looked upon as any general remedy although they would be a great convenience to those fractions of the country through which they ran. He was glad to have had this opportunity of making these observations on this particular remedy, which he was pleased Her Majesty's Government had introduced. In regard to the protection to cattle, he was glad the present Minister of Agriculture had seen his way to continue that protection, but there was one matter which some people might think small, but which was not in reality small, and that was the protection to the consumers of our meat against foreign imported meat. It was, of course, impossible to stamp a mutton chop or to engrave something on a beef steak, but they could follow imported meat from the port of landing and make it penal for a man to sell foreign meat in his shop without advertising it as such. By a system under which a man's books should be open to inspection they could do a great deal to prevent a man from selling, wholesale, foreign meat as English. The English grazier, butcher, and cattle-dealer would get a large benefit provided there were means of securing the advertising of that as foreign meat which was foreign meat. He trusted the Government would look upon these matters in a serious way.

*MR. CHANNING (Northamptonshire, E.) was glad, as Chairman of the Central Chamber of Agriculture in the previous year, to follow the hon. Member for Hampshire (Mr. Jeffreys). He wished to congratulate him on the moderate and temperate way in which he had laid his case before the House of Commons. The hon. gentleman had dwelt upon the depressed position of the wheat industry in this country. That was largely, if not entirely, a question of price, and he did not gather from the speech of the hon. Member that he gave support, in any very definite form at any rate, to either of the remedies with regard to price which had been in the past and which were now put forward as panaceas for agricultural depression. As to Protection, those who had sat upon the Agricultural Commission during the last two years had noted the striking evidence from practical tenant farmers who had engaged in the fattening of cattle, and who had pasture land, to the effect that cheap feeding stuffs from abroad had been one of the best helps they had had during the great depression of Agriculture. The other remedy, of which he supposed they were likely to hear a good deal in the course of the Debate and in the course of the Session, was an alteration of the currency. That was obviously one of those remedies which, if it were a remedy, if it were not likely to prove a source of far greater evil and disaster to the industries of the country, was a remedy which could only be looked for after prolonged negotiations with other countries and after prolonged discussion by experts in this country. It was not a remedy of to-day or to-morrow; it might conceivably be a remedy far in the next century. No one would contend that wheat could be grown with anything like even a fair balance sheet except perhaps in the neighbourhood of large towns to which there was ready access. The Seconder of the Amendment (Mr. Wharton) had touched upon a very practical remedy which the present Government was placing in the hands even of the wheat farmers. He was confident that, if the hon. Member for Ripon and the hon. and gallant Member for Essex (Major Rasch) had read the Report and evidence of the Committee appointed by the Board of Trade to deal with the question of Light Railways, they would know that the practical and sensible suggestions they had made were substantially the same as the Committee had arrived at. The hon. Member for Hampshire would not deny that it would be a great economical advantage to the wheat farmer in outlying districts if he were able by means of cheap transit to send his straw into a large town and carry out manure to his farm, and thus be placed in the same position as a man who was farming close to a large town. The hon. Member for Hampshire referred to the great diminution in the stocks of cattle and sheep. Of course that was largely due to the exceptional season of 1893. Before the Agricultural Commission it was clearly shown that the terrible diminution of the live stock upon farms was also greatly due to the fact that the tenants' capital had been whittled down year by year. He was driven to the conclusion that, although the landlords of England had dealt very generously and wisely in many ways with their estates, they had been exceedingly shortsighted in one respect—they had not met the initiatory stages of the acute form of depression in the country by sufficiently prompt reductions of rent. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!" *and* "Hear, hear!"] If hon. Members would have the goodness to examine the facts, which he had very patiently done, as disclosed by evidence before the Royal Commission, they would find the reductions of rent in many parts of the country, and especially in those districts where agricultural depression had been worst—in Essex and in other counties—they would find the reductions of rent did not begin till several years after the acute stage of the depression. We knew from the calculations which had appeared in many agricultural newspapers, the losses by tenant farmers in many districts in those years of depression had been from £1 to £2 per acre; in some cases even more. The rents had not been proportionately reduced. The real fact was that farmers had been paying their rent out of capital, and, therefore, their capital had been diminishing year by year. As a consequence, they had not been able to place on their farms an adequate stock of cattle and sheep, and so keep up the fertility of the soil. He advocated a settlement on just lines of the question of tenant-right, so as to prevent a tenant losing the value of his improvements and paying his rent out of capital. There were other points on which he was in agreement with his hon. Friend. There was, for instance, the question of the rating of agricultural land. In the County of Essex and in other counties where depression was most prevalent some of the assessments had not gone down in proportion to the annual value of the land. He therefore, heartily supported the Mover and Seconder of the Amendment in asking the Government to institute a full and impartial inquiry into the incidence of Local Taxation upon Agricultural Land. Indeed facts which had come to his knowledge led him to the conclusion that in many Unions of the country the assessment on agricultural lands and agricultural buildings was not so equitable or just as the assessment on house property in urban districts. The question of the division of the rates between owners and occupiers—a reform for which the farmers of the country had long been asking the Governments of both political parties—was also of great importance to agriculturists. One of the most interesting pieces of evidence given before the Agricultural Commission was that of the Duke of Richmond, one of the best and most generous landlords in the country, who stated that, having weighed and considered the evidence which was laid before the great Commission over which he had most admirably presided ten or twelve years ago, he had introduced on all his estates the principle of division between owner and occupier in regard to all new rates. That concession was asked by agriculturists of the Conservative Government in 1888, and was not granted. He ventured to say that the tenant farmers would be deeply grateful to the present Government if it could see its way to take a step forward in that direction. He also thought that the Government ought to favourably consider the proposal to allow loans at a low rate of interest—$3\frac{1}{2}$ or $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent.—to landlords, or landlords and tenants combined, on some form of joint security, for the erection and repair of agricultural buildings and the improvement of the fertility of the land. In many districts large areas of land had sunk into a condition that a heavy outlay was necessary for what might be called the physical reconstruction of the soil, if

Agriculture were to have any chance at all. The question of the development of agricultural co-operation was one in which hon. Members interested in Agriculture naturally took a deep interest; though perhaps it was hardly a matter for legislation. Again and again witnesses representing the great dairy interests of England before the Agricultural Commission were asked why the dairy farmers did not combine and work their industry as it was worked in Denmark. Owing to the thorough organisation of the trade in Denmark the great importing firms in London could wire for butter to Copenhagen and rely on having any amount of the most suitable butter, all to one sample and standard of quality, put on board ship within a few hours for the London market. Such a system was almost unknown in this country. In Derbyshire there was a great dairy association, but it confined itself almost altogether to the question of railway rates, instead of combining to produce the class of butter that would get control of the great market of London, and thus benefit dairy farmers and give employment to large numbers of the working classes. With regard to the question of Tithes, he hoped the Government was prepared to deal with the matter in a favourable and prompt manner, and relieve agriculturists of some of the unfair incidence of that Tax. He was bound to say that no case could be made out against the Government of neglecting the interests of Agriculture. Indeed, the arguments of the speeches of the Mover and Seconder of the Amendment were in favour of the Government. It was admitted by those hon. Gentlemen that the Minister for Agriculture had carried out the Cattle Diseases Legislation in a most effective manner. It would not be denied also that the President of the Board of Agriculture had carried through the House of Commons two Bills which were of great advantage to agriculturists. The losses from swine fever through the country had been estimated at an enormous amount, and, as the epidemic mostly affected small holdings, it was gratifying to know that the provisions of the Act were put into operation in a very vigorous manner. The other Act which his hon. Friend had carried was one in which great interest had been taken for years in the House, and which he had the honour of having brought forward in the first instance—the Act for checking frauds in fertilising and feeding stuffs, which, if effectively put in force, would prove of very considerable value to agriculturists who largely used those essentials of good farming. He therefore ventured to say that the Government had dealt in a generous, sympathetic, and practical spirit with some of the more urgent needs of agriculture. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford, would remember that at the beginning of the Session of 1893, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian proposed to have a Select Committee to deal with the question of agricultural depression. Several hon. Members who took an interest in agricultural affairs, himself included, knowing the habits and ways of Select Committees, and the long delays which took place in bringing their investigations to a close, desired that the reference to the Committee should deal with the Agricultural Holdings Act or some other specific matter. But while he had no desire to introduce the evil spirit of Party animosity into the Debate—for he had always, and would have always the greatest pleasure in co-operating with hon. Gentlemen opposite in Agricultural matters—he should point out that the appointment of the Committee was deliberately delayed throughout the whole of the Session of 1893, by an adverse motion which had been put on the paper by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford. The Liberal County Members approached the right hon. Gentleman and invited him to formulate proposals to which the Select Committee might be limited in their investigations, and so bring about an agreement between the two sides of the House as to what the Committee was to do, but the invitation was refused by the right hon. Gentleman. The Government then took the only course available to them, and that was the appointment of a Royal Commission to deal with the whole question of agricultural depression He did not know whether or not hon. Members opposite thought that was a wise step; but having sat on the Commission for two years, he could say that it afforded the fullest and amplest opportunities for giving evidence on every point with regard to agricultural depression. The appointment of the Commission was, he thought, a great and useful administrative step on the part of the Liberal Ministry in dealing with the difficulties of agriculturists. But what had happened in regard to that Royal Commission? He had hopes, when it initiated its inquiry, that it might be directed to the most practical issues; that it might examine at once the most important witnesses, and so arrive at its Report in the early stage of its proceedings. He had just the same feeling about the Royal Commission as he had about the Select Committee suggested by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian in 1893, namely, that it should be directed specifically to consider the most urgent and essential matters, and so provide the materials for effectual legislation for the benefit of Agriculture at the earliest possible moment. But the Commission had not yet concluded; it was about to resume its sittings, and its Report was not yet in sight, which he thought was a fact most disastrous to the interests of Agriculture. It was a lamentable loss to the agricultural community that the Royal Commission had not reported and had not placed its recommendations in the hands of the Government to deal with at the beginning of this Session. In the past Session of Parliament there was one satisfactory piece of work attempted for the benefit of Agriculture. They had recently lost many Members of the House whom they greatly respected, and no hon. Member was more respected among those interested in Agriculture than the late hon. Baronet who represented the Evesham Division. Sir E. Lechmere introduced a Bill last Session to provide better security for the capital and improvements of market gardeners. That Bill passed a Second Reading in this House with the cordial co-operation of every section of it. It was sent to the Standing Committee Upstairs, where it was carefully considered, and its progress was greatly facilitated by the co-operation of his right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Agriculture. The result of those discussions was the production of a Bill which carried out in the best and most effectual way a reform giving full security to the market gardeners and fruit growers for their capital and improvements in every part of the country. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford, however, insisted on an Amendment to that Bill, which took away the real value of it in the opinion of Sir E. Lechmere and of all who were interested in the question. The Amendment which the right hon. Gentleman suggested would have placed it in the power of a landlord of such a holding to prevent the tenant from carrying out the improvements contemplated, and would have defeated the purpose of the Bill, as agreed upon in the Standing Committee, which would have enabled the tenant to carry out those improvements if an arbitrator under the Agricultural Holdings Act considered they were suitable to the holding and added to its value.

Mr. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford: The hon. Member is inaccurate; he is making a statement for which there is no foundation.

Mr. CHANNING said, it was stated by Sir Edmund Lechmere that the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman practically destroyed the value of the Bill, and that it was an Amendment which reduced the Bill to a permissive form. He was glad to learn from the speech of the Prime Minister that the Government did not confine their proposals with regard to Agriculture to the proposal for light railways. The Prime Minister had added that if the Royal Commission had reported and the facts had been in the possession of the Government, he would have been in a position to make an attempt to carry out the reforms recommended. He submitted that the facts he had brought forward showed that the Government had not neglected Agriculture; on the contrary, they proved that the Government had done their utmost to carry out a beneficial as well as a many-sided policy with regard to it. Not only was there a good record of performances on the part of the Government, but there had been a sound declaration of policy which all practical agriculturists in the country would recognise as beneficial to them and full of hope for the future of Agriculture.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—*(Mr. Chaplin).*

Motion agreed to.

Debate adjourned till To-morrow.

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes past Five o'clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, 7th February 1895.

The **LORD CHANCELLOR** took his seat on the Woolsack at a quarter after Four of the clock.

NOTICE OF MOTION.

Viscount CROSS gave Notice that on an early day he should call attention to the great delay in the presentation of the Report of the Opium Commission. That Commission, he believed, finished its sittings before Parliament was prorogued last Autumn, and, as he understood, the Report itself was promised in the Autumn. It had not yet appeared, and he could not help saying it was somewhat unfair to the Indian Government that they should not know what the Report of the Commission might be. At the same time he should call attention to the expenditure which had been placed on the Indian Government in consequence of this Commission. They must bear half the expense of the Commission, which, he was bound to say, in the circumstances, seemed extremely hard.

SCOTTISH SEA FISHERIES.

The LORD PRIVY SEAL (Lord Tweedmouth) presented a Bill for the Better Regulation of Sea Fisheries in Scotland.

Bill read 1^a.

House adjourned shortly after half after Four o'clock till To-morrow at a quarter after Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, 7th February 1895.

The House met at Three of the clock.

STANDING ORDERS.

Ordered—

That the Select Committee on Standing Orders do consist of Thirteen Members: Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Coddington, Mr. John Ellis, Sir Thomas Esmonde, Mr. Halsey, Mr. James Lowther, Sir John Lubbock, Sir John Mowbray, Colonel Nolan, Mr. Stansfeld, Sir Mark Stewart, Mr. Storey, and Mr. S. Whitbread.—(*Sir John Mowbray.*)

SELECTION.

Ordered—

That the Committee of Selection do consist of Ten Members: Sir Charles Cameron, Sir John Dorington, Mr. Halsey, Mr. Illingworth, Mr. Justin M'Carthy, Mr. Arthur Williams, Mr. Wharton, Mr. S. Whitbread, Mr. Wodehouse, and the Chairman of the Select Committee on Standing Orders.—(*Sir John Mowbray.*)

INTOXICATING LIQUORS (LICENCES REFUSED).

Ordered—

Return of the number of Victuallers', Beerhouse, and other Licences for the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors, the renewal of which has been refused in the year 1894 by the Justices of the Peace in each Licensing District in England and Wales, showing in each case the ground of such refusal, especially when such ground was in any instance that the Licence was not required, and showing also the result of appeal, if any (in Continuation of Parliamentary Paper No. 154, of Session 1894).—(*Mr. John Ellis.*)

TUBERCULOSIS.

Ordered—

Return showing, in respect of the year ended the 25th day of March, 1894, the number of Carcasses seized by Medical Officers of Health and Inspectors of Nuisances in England and Wales under Section 116 of the Public Health Act 1875, and Section 47 of the Public Health (London) Act 1891, and of the number of such Carcasses condemned by Justices under Sections 117 and 47 of those Acts, distinguishing, as far as practicable, the number so condemned in consequence of the Animal having suffered from Tuberculosis: And, similar Return in respect of the year ended the 25th day of March, 1895 (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 485, of Session 1893-4).—(*Mr. Knowles.*)

THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

PARLIAMENT (DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS).

Copy ordered,—Of Contract, dated the 16th day of January 1895, entered into with Messrs. Waterlow and Sons Limited for printing and publishing Reports of Debates and Proceedings in Parliament.—(*Sir John Hibbert.*)

Copy presented, accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 23.]

NOTICES OF MOTION.

THE SPEAKER: I have to ask hon. Members, when they hand in Notices of Motion, to be good enough to put upon the Notice of Motion the number they have drawn in the Ballot. It will greatly facilitate the proceedings to do so.

THE ELECTRIC LIGHT AND EXPLOSIONS.

MR. HOWARD (Middlesex, Tottenham): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the explosion on Southwark Bridge on Friday last, by which several persons were injured, and whether any Report has yet been made by the Inspector with reference to a similar explosion in Cannon Street in November; and, what steps the Board of Trade contemplate taking to protect the public from these dangers which have now become of such common occurrence?

MR. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether a thorough investigation is being, or will be, made into the cause of the several street explosions which have recently taken place in London, and especially into the one on Southwark Bridge on the 1st instant?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. BRYCE, Aberdeen, S.): I will answer the questions of the hon. Members for Tottenham and East Finsbury together. Inquiries have been held into the causes of the recent explosions in street boxes in Cannon Street, the Euston Road and Southwark. The Reports shall be laid upon the Table. The Electric Lighting Regulations of the Board for securing the safety of the public, provide that all street boxes shall be efficiently protected against any accumulation of gas or water, and the Board are earnestly pressing upon Electric Lighting Companies the necessity for full compliance with these Regulations. It is most desirable that the Gas Companies should adopt the best means at their disposal to detect and remedy any defects in their mains, and I am now taking steps to call their attention to the matter.

FRANCE AND MADAGASCAR.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been drawn to the statement that an English firm of shipowners has contracted to carry materials of war for the French Government to Madagascar; whether France and Madagascar are already in a state of war, or at least have indulged in mutual acts of hostility; and, whether, as this country is in the position of a neutral Power towards both belligerents, it is the intention of the Government to take any steps to prevent materials of war from being carried for either party by contract on British steamships?

MR. SPICER (Monmouth): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been drawn to the Debate in the French Chamber of Deputies on Saturday last, in which it was stated that an English firm has contracted to convey war material for the French Government to Madagascar, a friendly Power; and, if this is permitted by International Law; if so, what action the Government propose to take to safeguard the lives of English people in Madagascar, which may be endangered by this apparent evidence to the Native population of the sympathy of England with the designs of France?

SIR H. HOWORTH (Salford, S.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has considered if the transporting in English vessels of French troops or materials of war for the purpose of fighting the Malagasies, with whom England is at peace, constitutes a breach of the Foreign Enlistment Act; and, if so, whether the Government propose to take any steps to prevent such transport in future?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): Perhaps I may answer these questions together. We have not received any notice either from France or Madagascar that they are at war, but hostilities have taken place, and the question as to the operation of the Foreign Enlistment Act will be considered in conjunction with the Law Officers.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): May I ask whether the hostilities now taking place are held to constitute a state of war, with its consequences?

SIR E. GREY: I believe it has been held in practice that a state of war may be constituted by the breaking out of hostilities; but that is a point which will be taken notice of by the Law Officers.

MR. C. J. DARLING (Deptford): Has it not always been recognised in this House, that there is all the difference in the world between a state of war and military operations such as those which took place in Egypt?

SIR E. GREY: I have no doubt that these questions of previous practice will be taken into consideration by the Law Officers.

THE DELIVERY OF POST CARDS ABROAD.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is aware that large numbers of plain (or private) postcards, bearing adhesive penny stamps, are only delivered Abroad on payment of a fine of 3d. (or 30 cents.) in every case, solely on account of the absence of the printed or stamped words "post cards" on the cards delivered: and, whether the required words may be written by the sender, so that large quantities of private postcards may not be disqualified for use in foreign correspondence. Also, whether the fine on delivery of an unstamped inland postcard is 2d., or four times the deficient postage, and of an unstamped registered newspaper (or book packet weighing 2 oz.) 1d., or twice the deficiency: and, whether there is any reason for levying a larger fine against postcards than against other postal matter.

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. A. MORLEY, Nottingham, E.): A post-card which does not comply with the conditions of its use, the chief of which is that it should be stamped, is treated throughout the Postal Union as a letter, and is charged with the fine which is chargeable in the case of an unpaid letter. It appears to me desirable to deal with the unpaid inland cards in the same way as unpaid foreign cards are dealt with. With respect to the fine levied Abroad on private cards sent out of the country on which the words "post card" have not been printed, I beg to add that I have been in communication on this subject with the Authorities of the Postal Union, but the answers I have received to the questions which I have directed to be submitted to them do not enable me at the present moment to make the concession to which the hon. Member refers—namely, that the words "post-card" may be written on the card. The subject is one which, I think, well deserves consideration at the next Postal Congress.

DISTRESS IN BAWNBOY UNION.

MR. TULLY (Leitrim, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he is aware that at the recent meeting of the Guardians of the Bawnboy Union the Rev. P. Gilchrist, P.P. Drumreilly, South Leitrim, attended and pointed out that, owing to the failure of the potato crop, as well as the agricultural depression, a number of his parishioners were in a state of extreme destitution; whether the Congested Districts Board have refused to carry out any relief works in the district; and whether it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to have steps taken, by giving remunerative employment, to alleviate the acute distress existing in this and other parts of the country.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-on-Tyne): I am not aware that the Rev. Gentleman referred to in the question, attended at the last meeting of the Bawnboy Board of Guardians, but I understand he recently addressed a communication to the Local Government Board on the subject of the existence of distress in his parish. The Congested Districts Board have intimated to the Guardians of this Union, in reply to a resolution lately passed by them, that the undertaking of engineering or other works with the object of affording immediate relief by the employment of persons suffering from exceptional temporary distress, is not one of the modes in which the Board are authorised to expend their funds. The condition of the poorer classes in the Bawnboy Union, has, however, formed the subject of special investigation by the Local Government Board in common with other districts in the West of Ireland, where abnormal distress among small landowners may be apprehended in consequence of the partial failure of the potato crop. Government has been advised that in two electoral divisions of the Bawnboy Union—namely, Benbrack and Templeport, a number of people may require assistance from this cause towards the end of March or beginning of April, and it will probably be necessary to open relief works for the assistance of these people about that time.

THE IRISH MAIL SERVICE.

Captain DONELAN (Cork, E.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether his attention has been drawn to the Resolution unanimously adopted last week by the Cork Chamber of Commerce and Shipping, expressing disappointment at the delay in arranging a new contract for an accelerated mail service between London and Dublin; and if he can state the nature of the fresh proposals submitted by the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company; and whether he would consider the desirability of re-casting the present night mail service from Queenstown and Cork, so as to give to the south of Ireland a second daily mail service to London and other parts of England.

Mr. A. MORLEY: At the present moment I should not be justified in stating the nature of the fresh proposals submitted by the Packet Company on the basis of Tender No. 2. I am not sure that I understand the second part of the hon. Member's question, as Cork and Queenstown already enjoy two mail services *via* Kingstown and Holyhead to London and other parts of England.

Captain DONELAN: Does not the second paragraph of my question allude to the fact that the night mail service is of very little use? Could not the right hon. Gentleman arrange two day services?

Mr. A. MORLEY: If the hon. Member will send me a copy of the Resolution to which his question refers, with any suggestions he may have to make, I will take care that they shall be considered.

HAULBOWLINE DOCKYARD.

Captain DONELAN: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether his attention has been drawn to a Resolution unanimously adopted at a recent meeting of the Queenstown Town Commissioners, calling upon the Admiralty to pass in full the Estimates submitted for 1995–6 for works required at Haulbowline Dockyard; and whether, in view of the necessity for the works included in these Estimates (namely, a shipwrights' shed, a saw-mill shed, a hauling-up slip, a pitching slope, and an additional dolphin at entrance to basin), the Admiralty will sanction the proposed expenditure?

The SECRETARY to the ADMIRALTY (Sir U. Kay-Shuttleworth, Lancashire, Clitheroe): Correspondence on the subject of the Resolution in question has passed between the First Lord of the Admiralty and the Town Commissioners of Queenstown. It would be premature for me to state before the Estimates are presented what the decision of the Admiralty may be with regard to the provision for works at Haulbowline. I may, however, repeat the assurance that it continues to be the policy of the Admiralty to maintain the efficiency of Haulbowline as a repairing yard.

Captain DONELAN: May I remind the right hon. Gentleman that these Estimates have been recommended as absolutely essential to the proper equipment of the Dockyard, even for repairing purposes, by the Naval Officials there; and as the total cost is estimated at under £6,000, will the right hon. Gentleman use his influence with the Admiralty to induce them to pass these Estimates?

Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: It would be premature at present to say anything.

THE INDIAN COTTON IMPORTS.

Captain SINCLAIR (Dumbartonshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India, whether the Papers in regard to the Indian Cotton Import Duties are ready, and whether they will be laid before the House and circulated to Members before the conclusion of the discussion on the Address in reply to the Queen's Speech.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.): The Papers were laid on the Table of the House on Tuesday, and they will be delivered to honourable Members to-day.

THE NAVAL RESERVE.

MR. FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, how many out of the 800 seamen class, proposed to be engaged from the Mercantile Marine in the financial year 1894–5, had been enlisted on the 1st of January last; what proportion of the crews of the subsidised cruisers *Lucania*, *Campania*, *Teutonic* and *Majestic*, are required to be members of the Royal Naval Reserve; and do these vessels carry an aggregate of more than 600 firemen and trimmers; and what is the total number of firemen allowed to be enrolled in Liverpool in the Royal Naval Reserve?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: The reply to the first paragraph is 52. It has been agreed that on the *Teutonic* and *Majestic* the crews are to belong to the Royal Naval Reserve to the extent of one-half (as nearly as possible). The agreement as to the *Lucania* and *Campania* is now in its final stage, but has not been signed. About 600 firemen, trimmers, &c., are borne on these four ships. No specified proportion of the Royal Naval Reserve firemen was allotted to the respective ports; but 334 (namely, about one-fifth of the whole number of 1,600) have been entered at Liverpool.

MR. FORWOOD: I will ask my right hon. Friend whether he will make an effort to increase the number of firemen at Liverpool?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: Liverpool really has its full share.

THE ARMENIAN BISHOPS.

MR. C. E. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, what are the specific offences for which the Armenian Archbishops of Marash and Zeitoun, and the Bishop of Moush, are now, and have been for some years, in prison: for what offence the Bishop of Arabzir has been exiled to Jerusalem, and detained as a State prisoner in the Armenian Patriarchate in that city: and, whether Her Majesty's Government will exert its influence to secure the release of those Prelates, having regard to the 62nd Article of the Treaty of Berlin?

SIR E. GREY: Her Majesty's Government understand that the Archbishop of Marash (or Fermonz) was charged with harbouring rebels. The Archbishop of Zeitoun with having been president of a revolutionary committee, of having fortified a monastery, attacked the Zeitoun Prison, and enabled two prisoners to escape. The Bishop of Moush was accused of inciting the Armenian population to sedition. The Bishop of Arabzir was reported to be an active member of the Revolutionary Party, he was first removed to Diarbekr, where he again incited the people, and was eventually exiled to Jerusalem. As regards the measures to be taken for the release of these prisoners, I have nothing to add to my replies to the hon. Member on April 19th and July 31st last. The cases have had careful attention, and all that has hitherto been both justifiable and possible has been done by Her Majesty's Embassy.

ARMENIA.

MR. C. E. SCHWANN: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in view of the widespread anxiety as to the treatment of Christians in Turkey, whether he will lay upon the Table of the House, at an early date, the Reports of Her Majesty's Consular Officers in Asiatic Turkey, dealing with the condition of the Armenian population, which had been received by the Foreign Office between June, 1890, and September, 1894, and which had been withheld from Parliament?

SIR E. GREY: Her Majesty's Government have hitherto declined to produce these Papers because they considered that the publication of them would not tend to the advantage of the Armenians nor promote the combined action of the European Powers, which is so desirable and essential to produce any good results. For the same reasons I am not able in present circumstances to give any promise that the Papers in question will be laid upon the Table.

MR. SCHWANN asked whether the Reports were withheld because they were so terrible as not to be fit for publication?

SIR E. GREY: No, Sir; but I will tell my hon. Friend frankly, the information which has been received up to this point about what is known as the Sasun incident is very much more grave and serious than anything contained in previous Papers.

MR. F. S. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye): I beg to ask the Under Secretary whether he can give unqualified contradiction to the report that the Turkish Government had obtained from the British Government an assurance that no Parliamentary Papers will be issued for the present relating to the Armenian question? and whether he can state that the British Government has not tied its hands by any promise made on this subject to the Turkish Government?

SIR E. GREY: No, Sir; there is no foundation whatever for that report, and no promise of the kind has been made.

FRANCE AND MADAGASCAR.

SIR C. W. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that, in communicating to Her Majesty's Government the last made French Treaty with Madagascar, and in a despatch to French representatives at various Courts dated December, 1885, M. de Freycinet stated that this Treaty would not affect treaties existing between the Hova Government and other States (including Great Britain), and that there was no intention on the part of France to put any obstacle in the way of the enterprise in Madagascar of the subjects of other nations; whether the Convention of 1890 also saves the position of British subjects as entitled to most favoured-nation treatment in Madagascar; whether French traders have recently been favoured in the working arrangements of the Customs of Madagascar; whether a notice was recently given that all concessions by the Malagasy Government have to be approved by the French Resident in order to be valid; and whether there is any correspondence upon the subject which can be laid before Parliament?

SIR E. GREY: The answer to the first paragraph is in the affirmative. Under the agreement of 1890 the British Government recognised the French Protectorate over Madagascar on the understanding that it would not affect any rights or immunities enjoyed by British subjects in that island. We have not heard that French traders have been favoured in the working of the Customs. A notice was given in July, 1894, that any concession which is not approved by the Resident General and registered at the Residency General will be considered null and void. A question was addressed to the French Government with reference to this, but in view of the existing condition of affairs any discussion of it has been postponed for the present. The question whether any Papers can be laid will be taken into consideration.

H.M.S. "VULCAN," "HOOD," AND "TRAFALGAR."

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the Admiralty are aware that H.M.S. *Vulcan* can, when going astern, only use with safety one-fifth of her horse power, and is consequently unable to go astern at full speed; whether any report dealing with this matter has been made either by the Captain of the ship to the Admiral on the Mediterranean station, or by the Admiral to the Admiralty; and, if so, can he inform the House what the reason is of this defect; whether it is proposed to remedy it; and whether any other vessels of Her Majesty's Navy are defective in the same manner?

SIR U. K. SHUTTLEWORTH: In going astern for a prolonged period at high speed, difficulties have been experienced in the *Vulcan*, *Hood*, and *Trafalgar*, owing to abrasion of the rubbing surfaces. Consequently a more suitable material is being substituted. The engines can be and have been worked astern for short periods at high speed without risk or trouble.

COLLISIONS AT SEA.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade, whether he still adheres to the decision of the Board of Trade, as communicated in its circular of the 6th March, 1894, to shipowners, to recommend to Her Majesty that the revised regulations for preventing collisions at sea, therein referred to, should be carried into effect by Order in Council: and, whether, if any modification of this decision has since been arrived at, he can inform the House what that modification is and to what points it extends.

MR. BRYCE: Inasmuch as any objections which may exist to the putting in force of the regulations for preventing collisions at sea recommended by the International Conference at Washington, as subsequently revised, appear to me to be outweighed by the objection to allowing the results of that Conference to be lost and the hope of international agreement in an improved code of regulations abandoned, I have seen no reason to depart from the decision of the Board of Trade referred to in the question of March 6, 1894.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Will they be enforced in March?

MR. BRYCE: No, Sir, it will be impossible to enforce them in March. They will require to be notified by Order in Council which must lie upon the Table of the House for 40 days. After that it is necessary that notice should reach shipping in all parts of the world.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Is it a fact that the action of France has been delayed in consequence of uncertainty as to the action of the British Government?

MR. BRYCE: I am not in a position to say. The question should be addressed to the hon. Member the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs. We have been for some time without any answer from France as to the date.

COUNTY AND CITY COURTS, IRELAND.

MR. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether any arrangement has yet been made to hold more frequent fixtures of the County and City Courts for the recovery of debts; whether, in Scotland, the Registrar can hear evidence in an undefended civil bill process and make an order thereon; and whether that procedure can be introduced into Ireland to afford the Irish trading public similar facilities of recovering small debts cheaply and expeditiously.

MR. J. MORLEY: With reference to the first paragraph of the question, arrangements have been made for the holding of two Courts for the hearing of Civil Bills in the City of Dublin in each year, commencing with the current year, in addition to the four existing Courts. As regards County Courts, arrangements have also been made for the holding of two Courts for the hearing of Civil Bills, in addition to the two already existing, at the following places—namely, Ballyconnell and Bailieborough, Co. Cavan; Fermoy, Co. Cork; Gort and Tuam, Co. Galway. An additional Court will also be held at Belmullet, Co. Mayo, in addition to the one already held there. The Scotch County Court system and procedure is altogether different from the Irish, and there may be such a practice as that mentioned in the question, but I have no precise information on the subject. It would, I am advised, be inexpedient to withdraw from defendants in Civil Bill processes, whether for rent or other debt, the protection at present afforded by having the case heard and the claim proved before the Judge of the Court. This takes very little time, and relegating the matter to the Registrar might, in various parts of Ireland, lead to abuses.

PAROCHIAL ELECTIONS IN SCOTLAND.

MR. RENSHAW (Renfrew, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, whether, in consequence of a provision in Section 56, Sub-section 4, of The Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1894, it will be necessary for the returning officers at the first election of parish councillors to make provision for the elections taking place within the parish wards; and, whether, seeing that this will add very considerably to the expense of the first elections, he can take steps to provide that the conditions which apply to the second and subsequent elections in this respect should apply to the first elections also.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir GEO. O. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): I consider that it will not be necessary to make provision for the elections taking place within the parish wards, as it appears to me that the word "in" occurring in Section 56, Sub-section 4, does not mean "locally within," but that it signifies "for" or "according to" parish wards. It is not required by the Act that subsequent elections shall take place within parish wards, and there is no reason for the first election being in this respect different from subsequent ones. I may add that this view is shared by the Local Government Board for Scotland, and that Board will issue a determination to this effect upon a reference by any County Council under Section 14, Subsection 7, of the Act. If, however, the hon. Member considers the point doubtful and introduces a short Bill to remove the doubt, the Government will support it.

SCHOOL BOARDS AND COUNTY BOUNDARIES IN SCOTLAND.

MR. RENSHAW: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, whether application has been made by some Parochial Boards or School Boards for alterations of parish boundaries, which, if assented to, would have involved an alteration of county boundaries; and, whether a local inquiry has been sanctioned by him on any such application; and, if so, whether he has authority to alter a county boundary on any other application than that of a County Council or Town Council?

SIR GEO. O. TREVELYAN: I have received a few applications which, if assented to, would involve either the creation of a parish in two counties; or, if that were considered out of the question, an alteration of county boundaries so as to adapt them to the new parish boundary, and in all cases but one I decided against granting the inquiry. In that case (Skelmorlie) my decision was against the application. I have no authority to alter a county boundary, except on the application of a County Council or a Town Council, and any such alteration requires the confirmation of Parliament.

BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS COMMISSION.

MR. FIELD: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether the Bovine Tuberculosis Commission is still engaged in inquiry; whether their Report may be soon expected; and, whether, pending its issue, the Local Government Board will instruct its Medical Officers of Health to modify their directions of confiscating without compensation the property of traders who purchased the animals in open market?

MR. H. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) had given notice to ask the right hon. Gentleman what is the cause of the continued delay in the presentation of the Report of the Royal Commission on Tuberculosis; whether he is aware that on the 24th November, 1893, it was stated by the Government that it was confidently expected that it would be ready in December of that year; that on eight different occasions since then the Government have assured the House that it might be expected shortly; and, whether they still entertain any expectation that it will be presented shortly; and, if so, within what period.

MR. L. KNOWLES (Salford, W.) had given notice to ask when the Royal Commission will present a Report.

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE: I regret the delay which has occurred in the presentation of a Report by the Royal Commission. The delay is, to some extent, attributable to the illness and death of the late Lord Basing, who was the Chairman of the Commission. A new Commission, with Sir George Buchanan as Chairman, was appointed in November, 1894, Lord Basing having died in the previous month. During the recess I have been in communication with the Chairman on the subject, and he fully realizes how much importance is attached to the early publication of the Report. I am informed that the Commissioners, at a meeting held last month, agreed upon certain matters to be stated as the opinions of the Commission, and that they will meet at the end of the present month or the beginning of March, when a draft Report will be before them for consideration. I am not in a position to make any more definite statement. The Medical Officer of Health has no authority to confiscate meat which may be seized as diseased or unwholesome or as unfit for food. It is only a magistrate who can condemn the meat and order it to be destroyed or so disposed of as to prevent its being used for food. The Local Government Board have no power to give instructions to the Medical Officer of Health in the matter. His duties are prescribed by the Statute.

THE POOR LAW.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he will bring in a Bill during the present Session to consolidate the Poor Laws?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central): Looking to the engagements of the Government during the present Session, I cannot hold out any expectation that I shall be able to bring in a Bill to consolidate the Poor Laws.

MR. HOWELL: I shall take the earliest opportunity of calling attention to the subject.

THE WELSH LAND COMMISSION.

MR. KENYON (Denbigh, &c.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he could state when the evidence on the Welsh Land Commission is likely to be concluded? And, whether the Commission will report on an early day?

THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. G. W. E. RUSSELL, N. Beds.): I am informed that the Royal Commission on Land in Wales and Monmouthshire do not propose to hold any further sittings for the purpose of taking evidence in the country, and that they anticipate that all evidence-taking will be concluded in the course of the next few weeks. With regard to the Report, the Commission trust that it will be possible for it to be issued by the month of June or July next at the latest.

MR. KENYON: Will the Home Office limit the further evidence to matters relevant to the Commission?

MR. G. W. E. RUSSELL: It is not for the Home Office to dictate to the Commission what evidence they will receive. I can only answer that they hope to bring the taking of evidence to a conclusion.

CROSS CHANNEL TRANSIT OF LIVE STOCK.

MR. FIELD: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether any steps have been adopted to bring into practical effect the recommendations of the Departmental Committee on Cross Channel Transit of Live Stock?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. GARDNER, Essex, Saffron Walden): A new Order has been prepared for the better regulation of the Transit of Animals carried Coastwise. One or two points still remain to be settled between the Irish Authorities and the Board of Agriculture, but I do not think any serious difficulty will arise, and I expect to be able to issue the Order very shortly.

SIDE LIGHTS ON H.M's. SHIPS.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the Admiralty have caused the side-light screens of the vessels of Her Majesty's Navy to be so fixed, in accordance with the Order in Council of 30th January, 1893, that a line drawn from the outside edge of the wick to the foremost end of the inboard screen shall make an angle of four degrees, or as near thereto as may be practicable, with a line drawn parallel with the keel of the ship from the outside edge of the wick, as is required by the Board of Trade in the case of all British vessels whose lights are inspected by its officers?

SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH: No alteration has been made in the manner of screening the side-lights of Her Majesty's ships, which has for many years approximated to the system lately defined by the Board of Trade.

PRESS PASSPORTS FOR ARMENIA.

MR. JOHN E. ELLIS (Notts, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether it is correct that two correspondents of English newspapers who recently proceeded to Constantinople to obtain information on the Armenian question, with passports from Lord Kimberley, on presenting them at the Turkish Embassy for official endorsement, were by Rustem Pasha informed that this would be given by the Ottoman Consul-General, and that the necessary *visé* was refused by him after such assurance; and what steps Lord Kimberley has taken in the matter?

SIR E. GREY: No such incident is known to have taken place with regard to the correspondents of English newspapers. It has, however, been stated to me that some such circumstance has occurred in the case of two other gentlemen, but no complaint has been made to the Secretary of State by the owners of the passports, and no action has therefore been taken in the matter.

*MR. F. S. STEVENSON asked whether English Press correspondents had been prohibited from visiting the Sassoun district, and whether the prohibition extended merely to the Vilayet of Bitlis, or extended to other Armenian provinces?

SIR E. GREY replied, that he could not give the exact terms of the prohibition without notice. But some prohibition existed.

THE WELSH CHURCH AND IRISH LAND BILLS.

MR. WILLIAM H. K. REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the fact that the Bill dealing with land in Ireland is given priority in the Queen's Speech, means that that measure will be proceeded with before the other Government measures of which notice has been given?

MR. JOHN MORLEY: After the Welsh Disestablishment Bill has been read a first time, Motion will be made that the Irish Land Bill be read a first time; and the Second Reading of the Welsh Church Bill will be immediately followed by the Second Reading of the Irish Land Bill.

MR. W. REDMOND asked whether the Committee stage of the Welsh Church Bill would be taken before or after the same stage of the Irish Land Bill?

MR. J. MORLEY: We cannot say anything about the Committee stage of either Bill until we have obtained the Second Reading.

DR. J. E. KENNY (Dublin, College Green) asked whether the question of the evicted tenants in Ireland would be dealt with in the Irish Land Bill or in a separate measure?

MR. J. MORLEY said, that on the first night of the Session the Leader of the House (Sir W. Harcourt) dealt with that matter and gave a practical and adequate answer to the question.

THE SLAVE TRADE AND CONSULAR REPORTS.

MR. JOSEPH A. PEASE (Northumberland, Tyneside): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government have received any Consular Reports relating to the slave trade from any portions of the Turkish Empire; and, whether the present activity of the slave trade in Tripoli has been reported to the Foreign Office; if so, whether the Papers will be laid on the Table of the House?

SIR E. GREY: The recent reports will be examined with the view of seeing what Papers can be laid upon the Table.

SLAVERY IN ZANZIBAR AND PEMBA.

MR. JOSEPH A. PEASE: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government has recently taken any steps towards bringing about either the prompt abolition of slavery in the Islands of Zanzibar and Pemba, or even the liberation of those slaves illegally held in bondage in these British Protectorates?

SIR E. GREY: A Vice Consul has recently been appointed in Pemba who will shortly take up the appointment. It is hoped that information will now be obtained from a source which has been hitherto closed, which will facilitate a comprehensive examination of the subject. The Sultan has always been, and is now, ready to liberate at once any slave proved to be illegally held. The prompt abolition of slavery in these islands presents many difficulties, but Her Majesty's Government are now considering how the object in view can best be obtained.

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON AGRICULTURE.

ADMIRAL FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he will lay upon the Table of the House, for the information of Members, the important Brief or Statement prepared by Mr. C. Smith, of Whitney Court, Hereford, at the request of the Commission, which was printed by their order.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: I have consulted the Commission on Agriculture on this matter. They are of opinion that Mr. C. Smith had a full opportunity of giving his evidence before them on the subject, that he did so with great ability and with the advantage of being cross-examined. The Brief was merely prepared for the advantage of Members of the Commission, and it is not usual to publish such briefs as well as the evidence. Under these circumstances I do not think it necessary to issue it as a Parliamentary Paper.

INDIAN OFFICERS' GRIEVANCES.

SIR H. SEYMOUR KING (Hull, Central): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he has yet received an answer from the Government of India to his Despatch sent from the India Office at the end of May last year on the subject of the grievances of Officers in the Staff Corps; whether he is now in a position to lay upon the Table the Papers relating to these grievances, including the Memorandum submitted to the late Commander-in-Chief and his suggestions thereon; and whether any decision, and, if so, what, has been arrived at on the subject?

MR. H. H. FOWLER: A reply has been received from the Government of India, and the subject is now under my consideration in communication with the War Office.

WATER BALLAST IN SHIPS.

SIR SEYMOUR KING: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the fact that, although by the Merchant Shipping (Tonnage) Act, 1889, it is provided that, in the case of a ship constructed with a double bottom for water ballast, if the space between the inner and outer plating thereof is certified by a surveyor appointed by the Board of Trade to be not available for the carriage of cargo, stores, or fuel, then the depth required by Section 21, paragraph (2), of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854, shall be taken to be the upper side of the inner plating of the double bottom, and that upper side shall, for the purposes of measurement, be deemed to represent the floor timber referred to in that section, it has been held by the Board of Trade that when 7,000 cubic feet had been taken off the hold space to form the double bottom for water ballast, that part of the space used solely and wholly for the purpose of water ballast cannot be allowed off the tonnage; and whether, if this is a *casus omissus* in the Act, he will take steps to remedy the default by legislation?

MR. BRYCE: The practice of the Board of Trade Surveyors with regard to the point raised in the hon. Member's question is to act strictly in accordance with the provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1894, Sec. 81, and in the case of a ship constructed with a double bottom for water ballast to measure to the upper side of the inner plating of the double bottom. The Act provides no limit to the amount of space to be allowed as double bottom, and no case has come to the knowledge of the Department in which the space has been limited to 7,000 cubic feet. If the hon. Member thinks that hardship or injustice has arisen in any case, and will furnish me with particulars, the matter shall receive consideration.

OFFICIAL PARLIAMENTARY REPORTING.

MR. J. H. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether a change has taken place in the contractors for the official reporting of the Parliamentary Debates; whether the attention of the present contractors was directed to the Resolution of the House of February 13, 1891, against sub-contracting; whether he is satisfied that that Resolution is being observed; whether he will consent to lay upon the Table the terms of the present contract, and any sub-contract in connection therewith; and what recommendations, if any, of the Select Committee on Parliamentary Debates, which reported last Session, have been carried into effect?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): The answer to the first and second paragraphs of my hon. Friend's question is Yes. With respect to the third, as at present advised, I see no reason to believe that the Resolution is not observed. I have laid on the Table to-day a copy of the present contract. I am not aware that there is any sub-contract within the meaning of the Resolution, but if the reference is to the reporting, I have a letter from the contractors assuring me that the men employed are paid at the full market rate of wages. As regards the last paragraph of the question, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer has not been able to provide the supplies necessary for meeting the increased cost entailed by the recommendations of the Select Committee of 1893.

MR. DALZIEL: As I understand, there is a contract. But is there any sub-contract?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: Apparently not. It is merely an arrangement by the contractors for the reporting. My hon. Friend had better see the contract.

THE CROFTERS (SCOTLAND) ACT.

MR. J. G. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will state when the Bill to amend the Crofters Act (Scotland), 1886, will be introduced?

SIR GEO. O. TREVELYAN: Before laying a Bill to amend the Crofters Act (Scotland) 1886, on the Table of the House, it will be proper to await the presentation to Parliament of the Report of the Highlands and Islands Commission.

THE POST OFFICE AND THE TELEPHONES.

MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether, in view of the fact that the Local Authorities of this country are desirous of having the draft agreement with the Telephone Companies further considered, he will consent to have the matter referred to a Select Committee for consideration?

MR. J. W. BENN (Tower Hamlets, St. George's) asked the Postmaster-General if he would state to the House the facilities he proposed to give to such Municipalities as were prepared to compete with the National Telephone Company by providing a cheaper and more efficient telephone service?

MR. A. MORLEY said he could not comply without notice. In answer to Mr. Morton the right hon. Gentleman said: I have, as the hon. Member is aware, received during the last few days deputations from the London County Council and the Association of Municipal Corporations on this subject, and I am glad to think that those interviews have removed some of the objections or misapprehensions which were felt as to the effect of the agreement. I may repeat to the hon. Member, as I have already explained to the Deputations, that the agreements merely embody the heads of the arrangement signed by my predecessor in 1892 in accordance with the Report of the Select Committee of this House and with the policy approved by Parliament in the Telegraph Act of that year. In these circumstances the Government do not consider that there would be any advantage in referring the matter to a fresh Committee.

MR. A. C. MORTON asked whether the Municipal Corporations, including the London County Council, had not asked that all the agreements should be referred to a Select Committee?

MR. A. MORLEY replied, that the London County Council suggested the reference to a Select Committee. The Association of Municipal Corporations, however, did not make any suggestion of the kind.

MUNICIPAL VOTERS IN DERRY.

MR. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the state of things in the city of Derry, where, with a population of over 34,000 and a Parliamentary list of over 4,000 electors, the number on the municipal register is under 900, and where, although the Nationalists and Catholics form the majority of the population, there is not a single Nationalist or Catholic in the corporation or among the officials; and whether he will consider the possibility of introducing a Bill to extend the municipal franchise?

MR. J. MORLEY: The facts, I am informed, are substantially as stated in the first paragraph of the question, though I believe one of the two City Assessors is a Roman Catholic. These officials, however, draw no salary. The assimilation of the municipal and Parliamentary franchise in Ireland is, in my opinion, a much-needed reform, but I do not see any prospect of an opportunity arising in the present Session for legislating with a view to remedy the grievances that now exist in this regard.

BOARD SCHOOLS AND ROMAN CATHOLICS.

MR. E. F. V. KNOX (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education in how many cases during the last two years School Boards have objected to the opening of new Catholic Schools within their areas; and in how many cases he had been able to overcome their opposition?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham): There have been three cases in which a School Board has objected to a Catholic School within their district being placed in receipt of Government grant. In two of the three cases the School was already opened, and one of the two was not a new School; in the other plans had been submitted for a School not yet built. In two other cases the Board, while pronouncing the Catholic School to be, in their opinion, unnecessary, declined to make any formal objection to its receiving a grant, and, on a review of the circumstances, the School was placed on the Annual Grant List in both cases. It is not the duty of the Department to overcome opposition in such cases, though letters from the promoters of the new Schools in relation to this matter are always forwarded to the Board for their consideration and remarks.

LIGHT RAILWAYS IN IRELAND.

MR. KNOX: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will be able to re-introduce the Bill for the commutation of the Treasury payment towards Light Railways, under the Act of 1883, in Ireland, which passed through all its stages in this House without opposition last Session.

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: Yes, Sir, it has been agreed to re-introduce the Bill in question, and sufficiently early to give all persons interested an opportunity of having their views set forth in the House.

EDUCATION IN IRELAND.

MR. KNOX had upon the Paper a Notice to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he had been able to arrange during the Recess for the admission of the Christian Brothers' Schools into the National Education system. The hon. Member said the question had already been answered, but he wished for an explanation of one point in the answer—namely, whether the authority to declare the Schools efficient for the purposes of the Act of 1892 would be the Justices of the Peace, as at present, or the Education Department.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): asked whether, if any fundamental change were proposed in the system of National Education in Ireland, the House would have an opportunity of considering it?

MR. J. MORLEY replied, that, as he had already said, the last thing he should think of would be to complete this transaction without giving the House an opportunity of expressing an opinion. At the same time, the hon. Member must be aware that the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland had authority to sanction any change. But, as a matter of policy, he (Mr. Morley) thought it would be prudent that the House should be made aware of changes proposed. He could not answer the hon. Member for Cavan off hand. The whole of the circumstances required consideration.

MR. W. L. JACKSON (Leeds, N.) asked when the correspondence on the matter would be laid on the Table?

MR. J. MORLEY said that, as he told the leader of the Opposition on the previous day, the correspondence so far was one-sided. He (Mr. Morley) had addressed a communication to the National Board, and it was not desirable to produce any correspondence until he had their answer. He hoped there would be no undue delay in placing the correspondence before the House.

DISTRESS IN COUNTY CAVAN.

MR. KNOX: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he has received any reports as to the acute distress prevailing in those parts of the County Cavan which are within the Bawnboy and Enniskillen Unions; and, whether he will cause special enquiry to be made?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Enniskillen Board of Guardians, on the 29th January, adopted a Resolution alleging the existence of distress in parts of the Union, and the Local Government Board's Inspector has been directed to visit the district and report as to the facts. In the poorest parts of the Bawnboy Union—namely, the electoral divisions of Benbrack and Templeport, it is considered that a number of the small landholders may require assistance towards the end of March, or beginning of April, in consequence of the partial failure of the potato crop, and it will probably be necessary to open relief works for the relief of these people about that time.

THE WRECK OF THE "ELBE."

Mr. H. S. FOSTER (Suffolk, Lowestoft): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that the steamship *Elbe*, which recently foundered in the North Sea, under such lamentable circumstances, is a source of serious difficulty to navigation, and particularly to fishing boats, as the vessel now lies in the centre of the fishing grounds; whether it is in the power of the Board of Trade to take any steps for the removal of the danger; and, if the Board have no jurisdiction, whether he can state with whom the responsibility rests; and whether he will take any steps to assist in the matter by communication with the Dutch Government, or the Trinity Brethren, or otherwise?

Mr. BRYCE: I have received no reports that the sunken steamship *Elbe* is an obstruction to navigation, although it is understood that many boats are cruising about the neighbourhood. On receipt of any authentic information I will at once communicate with the Trinity House. The Board of Trade have no power to destroy wrecks, but the Trinity House are in the habit of doing so in proper cases. In such a case as the present I should suppose that they would, before taking any steps, communicate with the owners of the vessel. The depth of water in the neighbourhood of the wreck varies from 10 to 20 fathoms—60 to 120 feet.

Mr. H. S. FOSTER said, that in asking his question he had in view the danger, not to navigation, but to the fishing and trawling interests.

Mr. BRYCE said, that the question related to the danger to navigation only.

Mr. H. S. FOSTER hoped that the right hon. Gentleman would take the danger to the fishing interests into consideration, and that he would request the Trinity House to place a lightship over the spot where the wreck lay.

Mr. BRYCE said, that if the hon. Member could show that any danger to the fishing interests existed it would at once become a question for the Trinity House to consider what steps should be taken.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES asked whether it was not a fact that the wreck was in the way of the trawlers?

Mr. BRYCE said, he could quite understand that there might be some danger to trawlers from the position of the wreck; but the subject certainly was not referred to in the question.

JABEZ SPENCER BALFOUR.

Mr. C. J. DARLING: I beg to ask the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs what is now the position with regard to the extradition of Jabez Spencer Balfour, and whether the Government anticipate that he will arrive in this country in time to take his trial with the other persons against whom a prosecution for fraud in connection with the Liberator group of companies has been commenced.

Sir E. GREY: Delay has occurred owing to actions brought against Jabez Balfour before the Provincial Tribunal at Salta, and the case is at present suspended till the close of the legal vacation, towards the end of this month. I cannot say when a decision will be arrived at; but every effort is being made to bring the questions still pending to an issue.

THE OFFICIAL REPORTS INDEX.

Mr. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, whether he is aware that the Index to the Official Reports of the Debates of the House for last Session, which ended in August last, is not yet issued; and, whether he will take steps to secure its immediate issue, and to prevent such delay in future?

Sir J. T. HIBBERT: I am assured by the late contractors that they are making every effort to issue the General Index on Saturday next. Provision has been made in the new contract for avoiding similar delay in future, and the present contractors tell me that they see no reason why the Indexes should not be brought out at an early date.

THE REPORT OF THE SEA FISHERIES COMMISSION.

Sir A. K. ROLLIT (Islington, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the recommendations in the Report of the Sea Fisheries Committee will be sought to be embodied in legislation this Session; and, whether with the same object, Conventions are being negociated with other Maritime Powers.

MR. BRYCE: I propose very shortly to introduce a Bill for the purpose of carrying out the recommendations of the Committee with respect to Undersized Fish. It is no doubt desirable that there should be an International agreement on this subject, but, as my hon. Friend knows, the negotiation of such agreements is attended with much difficulty, and he will hardly expect me to say more than that I am carefully considering the matter.

RELIEF WORKS IN WEST KERRY.

SIR T. G. ESMONDE (Kerry, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if the Government has received any representations upon the subject of establishing relief works in West Kerry to meet the distress prevailing there; and whether it is proposed to take any steps in the matter?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Guardians of Tralee, Caherciveen, and Listowel Unions have passed a number of resolutions asking that loans may be made to small farmers for improving their lands, and that employment on relief works may be afforded to labourers and others. The construction of a light railway from Tarbert to Ballylongford has also been advocated as a relief work. The numbers in receipt of relief in Caherciveen and Listowel Unions are less than at the corresponding period of last year, while in Tralee the numbers in the workhouse have decreased, but the numbers on outdoor relief have increased. The Relieving Officers have funds for affording relief in cases of urgent necessity; but at present it does not appear that there is general distress among the landholders of such a character as to warrant the opening of relief works.

THE CONDEMNED MAN TWISS.

SIR T. G. ESMONDE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland has received any Memorials relative to the case of the condemned man Twiss, and if he can state what decision has been arrived at upon the subject?

MR. J. MORLEY said that a very large number of enormously signed Memorials had been received by the Lord Lieutenant on the subject of this condemned man. He could assure the hon. Gentleman that all these Memorials, and all the mitigating circumstances of the case, had been the subject of the most careful and earnest consideration, but he regretted to say that no grounds had been discovered for interfering with the case, and that it had been decided that the law must take its course.

THE FATAL ACCIDENTS INQUIRY (SCOTLAND) BILL.

MR. A. C. MORTON: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether it is the intention of the Government to re-introduce the Fatal Accidents Inquiry (Scotland) Bill, and why it was not mentioned in the Queen's Speech, as last Session?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: It is the intention of the Government to re-introduce the Fatal Accidents Inquiry (Scotland) Bill this Session.

MILITARY CONTRACTS.

SIR J. BARRAN (York, W.R., Otley): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether it is a fact that an order for 4,000 Cardigan jackets for India has been placed by the Military Authorities of this country in the hands of a firm in Leipsic, without a single manufacturer in Leicester being allowed to send in a tender?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. WOODALL, Hanley), in reply, assured his hon. Friend that no such order as that referred to had been given by the War Office.

MR. H. BROADHURST (Leicester), pursuing the same subject, asked if orders for any similar article had been sent to Germany?

MR. WOODALL said that Cardigan jackets were not now supplied to the British Army. The garment most nearly answering to the same description was the blue Jersey, and he should be happy to furnish the hon. Member with the names of the seven firms to whom orders for that article had been confided since September, 1892. They were well-known houses, carrying on their business in the country of which Leicester was the centre. As a matter of fact, there was not included in the War Office List of Contractors for that class of goods, the name of any foreign manufacturer.

THE SUPERANNUATION OF TEACHERS IN ENGLAND AND WALES.

Sir R. TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston): I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education what progress has been made with the proceedings of the Departmental Committee on the superannuation of Teachers in England and Wales, and when the Report will be presented to the House?

Mr. ACLAND: The Report of the Departmental Committee has now been completed, and I hope shortly to lay it on the Table of the House.

THE HEMP DRUGS COMMISSION.

Mr. W. S. CAINE (Bradford, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India when the Report of the Hemp Drugs Commission will be ready?

Mr. H. H. FOWLER: The Government of India are considering the Report of the Hemp Drugs Commission. When the Report comes home with their observations I will inform my hon. Friend.

THE IRISH NATIONAL BOARD OF EDUCATION.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland how many seats are now vacant at the National Board of Education in Ireland; and whether any steps have been taken to fill the vacancies?

Mr. J. MORLEY said, that there were at the present time three vacancies in the National Board of Education in Ireland. As the hon. Member was aware, it was very important that the full strength of the Board should be maintained, and he could therefore assure him that no time would be lost in filling up the vacancies on the Board.

THE LATE SIR JOHN THOMPSON.

Mr. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in consequence of the lamented death of Sir John Thompson, late Prime Minister of Canada, under special circumstances, Her Majesty's Government propose to make provision for Lady Thompson and the junior members of the family? In asking this question I beg to express my pleasure at seeing the right hon. Gentleman, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his place again.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: Sir W. V. Harcourt (Derby): I am much obliged to the hon. Gentleman. Her Majesty's Government have reason to believe that the people of Canada will make provision for Lady Thompson and the junior members of the family in recognition of the eminent services rendered by the deceased Statesman to the Dominion of Canada. The hon. Member has no doubt, from other sources, knowledge of a disposition to show private recognition also of the great services rendered by the late Sir J. Thompson.

THE FINANCE ACT, 1894.

Mr. H. S. LEON (Bucks, N.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that in rural parishes, owing to the present method of collection, the taxpayer has no means of knowing the extent of the reduction allowed from his gross assessment, Schedules A and B, under the Finance Act, 1894; and, whether instructions can be given to the Surveyors of Taxes to issue to each parish collector a form showing the gross assessment in the first column, and the assessment less the reduction under the Act?

Sir W. HARCOURT: As all the demand notes have long since been issued for 1894–95, the proposed change cannot be made this year. I will consider before next year whether any change can conveniently be made which will afford more guidance to the taxpayer.

SCOTCH FINANCE.

Mr. T. H. COCHRANE (Ayrshire, N.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Government will now appoint the Select Committee to inquire into the financial relations of Scotland to the other divisions of the United Kingdom and to the Imperial Exchequer, promised during the last Session of Parliament, but postponed by him till there was less financial pressure on the Officials of the Treasury?

Sir W. HARCOURT: When further progress has been made with the Irish inquiry I will consider how soon a Select Committee can be appointed to inquire into the Scotch finance.

THE FINANCE ACT, 1894.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether Her Majesty's Government propose to issue any Order in Council as provided by Section 20, Subsection (3), of the Finance Act, 1894; and, if so, when; and whether, in the meantime, the Commissioners of Inland Revenue have made, and will continue to make, the allowances provided for by Section 20, Sub-section (1), of the Act, in the absence of any such Order in Council?

Sir W. HARCOURT: Orders in Council are already prepared and will appear immediately, applying this Section to British India and to New Zealand. A similar course will be taken in the case of other British Colonies or Dependencies as soon as their claim to the benefit of this Section is established. The allowances provided for by the Section cannot be made in the absence of an Order in Council. Very few cases, however, have yet occurred in which Duty has become payable in respect of property which might have been affected by such an order.

THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERS.

Colonel NOLAN (Galway, N.): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, if provision will be made in this year's Estimates for a grant to the schools of the Christian Brothers in Ireland, so as to place the schools of the Christian Brothers on an equal footing, as to grants from the Exchequer, with other schools.

Mr. J. MORLEY said, that he had already explained to the House how the matter stood with regard to grants to be made to the Christian Brothers. The question of the admission and of the terms of admission to a share in the grant were still to be settled. If those terms could be satisfactorily settled no financial difficulty would arise.

THE UNEMPLOYED.

Mr. J. H. DALZIEL: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether, in view of the pressing character of the Unemployed Question in London and throughout the country, the Government contemplate taking any action in the matter; whether the Government can see their way to provide for an Official Census of the Unemployed; and, whether they will consent to the appointment of a Committee of experts to consider and report promptly with regard to the practicability of the different schemes that are put forward for dealing with the Unemployed.

Sir W. HARCOURT: The Government have naturally very carefully considered this question and the various schemes from the distressed districts for dealing with that distress which have been put forward, and the Government propose to appoint immediately a Committee of the House to consider the following points (I do not bind myself absolutely to the terms, but these will be the objects of the Inquiry; the terms will be put down, of course, when the Committee is moved for):

> "(*a*) The extent to which distress arising from want of employment prevails;
>
> (*b*) The powers at present possessed by Local Authorities for dealing with such cases; and,
>
> (*c*) The steps which ought to be taken, whether by changes in Legislation or Administration, to prevent or mitigate the evils arising therefrom."

That, I hope, will be taken as my answer to that question, and to the following question, which stands in the name of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for North-West Ham.

Sir J. GORST (Cambridge University): I was going to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether all remedial measures will be hung up until this Select Committee has reported?

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): I wish to ask my right hon. Friend whether the scope of the inquiries of this Committee will be extended to the provinces as well as to London?

Sir W. HARCOURT: Certainly, Sir. The object of the inquiries of the Committee is that the House may be satisfied as to the best means that can be adopted to meet the object in view. I may add that the Government have adopted the proposal for a Committee instead of a Royal Commission, because Royal Commissions are generally long in reporting, whereas the action of a Committee is more speedy, and will, I hope, arrive at an early conclusion.

Sir J. GORST: I would ask whether, as the distress is most urgent, the Committee will sit *de die in diem?*

Mr. J. W. BENN (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): Will the plan formulated by some of the Members for East London be considered by this Committee?

Sir W. HARCOURT: Certainly; one of the objects of the Committee will be to consider that and other plans.

Mr. J. G. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): Will it also be extended to Scotland?

Mr. A. GROVE: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, pending this inquiry, he can see his way to afford some temporary relief for the unemployed?

Sir W. HARCOURT was understood to say that he could not promise that.

Mr. J. BURNS (Battersea): I wish to ask whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer will consider the advisability, pending the appointment of the Committee and the issuing of their Report, to take steps for repeating the circular which was originally issued by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham and repeated by the President of the Local Government Board last year?

Sir W. HARCOURT: There is no objection to that.

Mr. C. J. DARLING: Can the right hon. Gentleman say whether, provided the Committee recommend legislation, he will give it precedence over the Bill for the relief of evicted tenants in Ireland?

Sir W. HARCOURT: The hon. and learned Member must see that it would be premature to answer that.

Mr. A. C. MORTON: I should like to ask whether the Committee will consider the question of afforestation and the reclamation of slob hands?

Sir W. HARCOURT: We will consider it; but until I have received further information my mind does not see very clearly how afforestation and reclamation of slob hands is going to relieve the distress.

***Mr. KEIR-HARDIE** (West Ham, S.): Arising out of this question, and in view of the urgent nature of the present distress, will the Government consider the advisability of supplementing any sums raised in localities by rates, by private subscription for relief of the distress, by contributing a similar amount from the public purse?

Sir W. HARCOURT: I am not in a position to give any answer to that, and I do not think the hon. Member can expect me, at the present moment, to return any definite answer thereto.

THE UNEMPLOYED IN WEST HAM.

Mr. T. N. A. GROVE (West Ham, N.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention has been called to the fact that a Census of the unemployed has recently been taken in West Ham, which shows that out of 44,690 adult workers 9,431 are out of work; and, whether, under the circumstances of extreme distress which prevails, the Government is prepared, pending an official inquiry, to temporarily assist the Local Authorities by granting a sum, in accordance with the precedents adopted with regard to Ireland, equivalent to the amount raised locally by any given Local Authority, so that by means of afforestment and similar methods profitable employment for those in need of work may be provided?

Sir W. HARCOURT: I cannot deal with it apart from other districts.

THE COLLISION IN THE IRISH CHANNEL.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade why no Board of Trade inquiry has been held with respect to the collision in which the lives of 300 persons on board the mail steamer *Munster* were imperilled?

Mr. BRYCE: Immediately after the collision between the *Munster* and the *River Avon* the Board of Trade ordered an inquiry into the circumstances, but the investigation has been, in accordance with the invariable practice, postponed pending the result of an action commenced in the Admiralty Court, which is a Court of Appeal from the decision of a Court of Inquiry.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: May I ask whether it is the practice of the Board of Trade, in case of railway collisions, to postpone Board of Trade inquiries; and, if not, why is it done in the case of collisions at sea?

Mr. BRYCE: In the case of railway collisions we always hold the inquiries immediately afterwards; but in the case of collisions at sea the Admiralty Court constitutes a Court of Appeal from the Court of Inquiry. Of course, if the Admiralty Court leave open any points upon which it may be necessary to have the finding of the Court of Inquiry, the proceeding before the latter will be resumed.

MR. T. M. HEALY: In view of the great public interest evinced in the matter of this collision, I wish to ask whether the right hon. Gentleman will not at once order some inquiry which will satisfy the public mind?

MR. BRYCE: It has been the invariable practice for many years past to postpone these inquiries, pending the decision of the Admiralty Court upon their subject matter; the reason for this practice being, as I have indicated, that the Admiralty Court is in the nature of a Court of Appeal for Courts of Inquiry.

BRITISH SUZERAINTY OVER THE TRANSVAAL.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Eccleshall): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the attention of Her Majesty's Government has been called to a statement made by President Kruger, at a public banquet in Pretoria, on January 20, to the effect that the Suzerainty of Her Majesty over the Transvaal ceased to exist in 1894; and whether Her Majesty's Government have sent, or intend to send, a Protest to the Boer Government against such repudiation of British Suzerainty?

THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. S. BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I stated yesterday that we had not, as yet, received the text of President Kruger's speech, referred to in the question, and I cannot, therefore, say he has been accurately reported or no. As regards, however, the question of Suzerainty, we adhere to the statement made by Mr. W. H. Smith, on behalf of the late Government, on February 25, 1890. Mr. Smith pointed out that the Convention of London, made in 1884, between Her Majesty and the South African Republic contained no express reservation of the Queen's right of Suzerainty; but that Her Majesty retained under the Convention the power of refusing to sanction Treaties made by the South African Republic with foreign States and nations, and with certain native tribes. Further, I repeat, what I said yesterday in my speech, that Article IV. of the London Convention makes it clear that, as regards its foreign relations, the South African Republic is within the sphere of British influence, and that the South African Republic can conclude no treaty or engagement with any State or nation (with the exception of the Orange Free State) until the same has been submitted to Her Majesty the Queen for approval. I need hardly point out that no statement made by one party to a Treaty or Convention without the assent of the other, can in any way affect the mutual position of the two parties.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT.

MR. SEYMOUR KEAY (Elgin and Nairn): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether the Local Government Board for Scotland has received a letter signed by leading inhabitants of Burghead appealing against the allocation of parish councillors in the three wards into which the parish of Duffus has been divided—namely, six councillors to No. 3 Ward, with a population of 1,164, while only four councillors are granted to No. 1 Ward, with a population of 1,671, and only three councillors to No. 2 Ward, with a population of 1,464, although the two last named wards contain large seaports and a water and drainage system; and, whether the approval of the Board, required by Section 9 (1) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, to the number of parish councillors—namely, 13, which have been fixed for the parish of Duffus, will be withheld, or if already granted will be withdrawn, unless the County Council agree to alter the allocation in question; or whether the Board will order an increase in the number of councillors so as to secure a full proportionate representation to Wards Nos. 1 and 2, as they did in the case of the Eastwood Ward in Lanarkshire?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: A letter from six inhabitants of Burghead protesting against the allocation was received by the Local Government Board. The population of the wards is correctly stated by the hon. Member. The County Council fixed the number of parish councillors for the parish of Duffus at 13, and the Board approved it. In the case of a parish like Duffus, which contains no burgh or police burgh, the Board's functions are confined by statute to approval of the total number of parish councillors. The Board has no power to interfere with the discretion of the County Council in allocating the number among the different wards. The case of Eastwood is quite different. In that case the parish contains parts of a Royal Burgh and of a police burgh, and the Board are in such a parish empowered to fix and allocate the number of members among the different wards if (as happened in the Eastwood case) the local bodies fail to agree. Parliament having vested full discretion in the County Council, the responsibility for the allocation must rest with that body.

ROAD CONTRACTORS IN IRELAND.

Mr. L. P. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been drawn to a judgment recently delivered in the Court of Queen's Bench, Ireland, in the case of Doherty, a road contractor in Londonderry, the effect of which is that County Contractors cannot be paid at the next Assizes for the work which they will then have completed; and whether, in view of the fact that, if acted upon, the effect of the judgment will be to cause serious loss and inconvenience to a large body of people and the disarrangement of fiscal affairs of the various Irish counties, he will consider the advisability of introducing a short, non-contentious Bill to remedy this state of things?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I called for a Report on the facts of this case yesterday, but not having yet received it, regret to have to ask the hon. Gentleman to defer the question till to-morrow.

IRISH ALLOTMENTS.

Colonel NOLAN (Galway, N.): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if the Government intend to give effect early this Session to the Resolution adopted by the House of Commons last year, to the effect that the advantages of the Allotment system should be extended to Ireland?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I am not able to frame any scheme which will carry out all that was embodied in the Resolution referred to, with reference to allotments in Ireland. At the same time I may state that I shall on a later day ask leave to introduce a Bill to amend the Labourers' Acts, and this will, I hope, carry out the object of my hon. and gallant Friend.

Colonel NOLAN: Will that give the option of granting land without insisting on the building of a cottage on the land so granted?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I do not think it will, but I would ask my hon. and gallant Friend to be good enough to wait till he sees the Bill.

PARISH COUNCILS AND RECREATION GROUNDS.

Mr. A. F. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether any Parish Council under the Local Government Act of 1894 can hire land for a recreation ground, or whether this must be done by the Parish Council adopting the Act of 1860, which only applies to parishes over 500?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: Parish Councils are empowered by Section 9 (1) (*b*) of the Local Government Act, 1894, to acquire land for a recreation ground without adopting the Public Improvement Act, 1860.

Mr. JEFFREYS: Without putting into force the adoptive Act?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: Yes.

IRISH POTATOES.

Mr. SEXTON (Kerry, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will propose to extend the time for repayment of seed supply advances to Irish Boards of Guardians; and whether, in view of the accumulated evidence of a disastrous failure of the potato crops in many parts of Ireland, and the warnings given by Boards of Guardians and other public bodies that the consequent diminution of the food supply and contraction of the labour market must lead to widespread destitution, the Government will act upon the suggestions generally made by instituting public works and granting loans to occupiers on easy terms for the improvement of their holdings in the districts severely affected.

Mr. J. MORLEY: The Bill dealing with the supply of seed potatoes to occupiers and cultivators of land in Ireland will provide that loans to be made to Boards of Guardians shall be repayable without interest, to the Board of Works by two equal instalments, the first of which shall be paid on the 1st of August, 1896, and the second instalment on the 1st of August, 1897. Experience proves that the longer the time allowed for the repayment of these loans the greater difficulty of collection, and upon the information at present before me I am inclined to think it would be inexpedient to extend the time for repayment as suggested. With regard to the second paragraph, I cannot, within the compass of a reply to a question, conveniently explain the special steps that were taken by me to ascertain the extent of the failure of the potato crop in Ireland, or outline the scheme of relief which has been adopted by the Government for dealing with the distress in various parts of the country. An opportunity for going fully into the matter will very shortly present itself, and, meantime, I can assure my hon. Friend that every step was taken—and in good time—that experience showed to be necessary for gauging the situation and dealing with the destitution caused by the potato failure. I may add that on the 28th of January relief works were opened in the Ballinrobe Union, County Mayo; on the 1st of February in Boffin Island; and on Monday last in various electoral divisions of the Clifden and Outerarde Unions, County Galway.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I beg to move that to-morrow the Introduction of Bills have precedence of the Order of the Day.

The Motion was agreed to.

ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY'S SPEECH.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

MR. H. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) resumed the Debate on Mr. Jeffreys' Amendment to the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. He said the hon. Gentleman who concluded the Debate on the previous evening, in defending Her Majesty's Government against the Amendment of his hon. Friend the Member for the Basingstoke Division of Hampshire, had made a personal attack upon him. He should have been able to bear with considerable equanimity any attacks made upon him by the hon. Member for East Northamptonshire, but a much more important personage—the Prime Minister himself—had also, he was informed, challenged him on Tuesday night by observations somewhat similar in their character, and he was afraid, therefore, that he must preface his remarks upon the general Amendment by some observations more or less polemical in their character. The hon. Member for East Northamptonshire had been somewhat severe upon him on account of some supposed shortcomings on his part with regard to a Bill in Grand Committee of the House last Session—viz., the Market Gardeners Bill—and especially with regard to some Amendments on which he was said to have insisted, and in consequence of which the Bill failed to pass into law. The hon. Gentleman was entirely and completely in error in that statement. He had had no opportunity of referring to the records, but he was perfectly confident that no Amendment of any kind was either moved or supported by himself, or ever submitted to the Grand Committee at all. So far from impeding a Bill which the hon. Member declared last night to be one of great value to a section of agriculturists, he could only say that the information which he had received from most competent Gentlemen with a thorough knowledge of the subject was, that that Bill, when it left the Grand Committe under the auspices of the hon. Gentleman and his friends, was totally and absolutely worthless for the purposes which it was desired to serve. He was bound to say that the hon. Member was not well advised in referring to this subject at all. He was informed that the hon. Member had said everything he could against him to the electors of Evesham; having shed the light of his vast and wide agricultural knowledge upon the voters of Evesham, the hon. Member had received his answer from the very gentlemen affected, the market gardeners themselves, and he hoped that he was as entirely satisfied with that answer as he was himself. The hon. Member then went on to refer to his action in that House in the year 1893.

MR. F. A. CHANNING (Northampton, E.) asked permission to make an explanation. In the statement which he had made at Evesham, and also in the

House, he did not commit himself to the proposition that the right hon. Gentleman had during the consideration of this Bill in that Committee put down any Amendment, but that he insisted upon certain changes in the form of the Bill which Sir E. Lechmere himself, in a letter addressed to the voters of Evesham, stated would have the effect of destroying the full value of the Bill by turning it from a compulsory into a permissory measure.

MR. CHAPLIN said his recollection of what occurred differed absolutely and entirely from the statement of the hon. Member. He was absolutely confident that in the statement he had just made to the House he was absolutely correct. The whole subject, so he was informed, was thrashed out thoroughly at Evesham, and it was impossible, he thought, that they could fight the contest at Evesham over again in the House. The hon. Member had criticised his action in 1893 at a time when Her Majesty's Government had announced their intention of proposing a Select Committee of the House of Commons to consider the question of agricultural depression. The hon. Member in the course of his speech informed them that he had made him an offer upon that occasion which he had refused. He owned that it had escaped his memory altogether, nor did he think that such an offer could have been of very great importance, for he did not understand that the hon. Gentleman was a Member of Her Majesty's Government or a Minister of Agriculture, or in a position to make him an offer of any kind whatever. The hon. Member complained that he had had the temerity to put down on the Paper an Amendment to the Motion for the appointment of a Select Committee. That was perfectly true; but what was his object in doing so? It was to secure that attention should be paid by Her Majesty's Government, and the Committee they appointed, to specific remedies for agricultural depression, rather than to inquiries which should disclose very little that was new to them. He had intimated to the Government on more than one occasion that so far as he was concerned, he had no desire to oppose the appointment of that, Committee, and that those who represented on that side of the House the agricultural interest would be content, even if they were permitted to have half a day for the discussion of the enormous interests involved in the position of that industry. What was the reply of the late Prime Minister? He said that the devotion of a single hour to the discussion of that question, in his opinion, would be nothing but a complete waste of time. They had resented that opinion on the part of the late Prime Minister, and he himself had accordingly declined to withdraw his Amendment. Sooner than give half-a-day's discussion to the question of agricultural depression the Government allowed a whole Session to go by, and then, having wasted all those months, they appointed at the last moment the Royal Commission which was now sitting. He turned from the statements of the hon. Member to the statements made by the Prime Minister with regard to his attitude upon that Royal Commission. What the Prime Minister said was this—

> "I say we had hopes of a prompt Report. Those hopes have been overclouded through the action of one of the noble Marquess's late colleagues. The Report which was about to be presented has been considerably postponed."

The Prime Minister then spoke of his motives in not uncomplimentary terms. The Prime Minister had been entirely misled himself, and his statements were most misleading also. He talked of the Report which was about to be presented; there was no such Report, and there could not have been, under any circumstances, unless they had adopted the principle of making their Report first, and taking their evidence afterwards. Some of their Sub-Commissioners were now in the country, and their Reports were not even completed, and he was informed that they could not possibly be completed within six weeks or two months from the present time. As the House was perfectly well aware, it was impossible to discuss the proceedings of a Royal Commission in any detail in the House of Commons in a Debate like the present one, and for that reason he should not have raised the question then, nor on any other occasion in the House had it not, been for the attack which had been made upon him by the most influential Member of Her Majesty's Government. He did not complain so much of the misleading statements of the Prime Minister but he did complain most bitterly of the source from which they came, and which, with the permission of the House, he would in a very few words explain. When the Royal Commission met after the Recess in November last the Chairman proposed substantially that the taking of evidence should be closed by that Commission before Christmas with a view to considering the Report. When this proposition came to be considered, so many Members of the Commission thought that it was altogether impossible, consistently with the performance of their duties, to take that course that the Chairman himself withdrew his own proposals, and they were never submitted to the judgment of the Commission. Two days afterwards there appeared in the newspapers a paragraph to the following effect:—

> "On Friday a long discussion took place at the meeting of the Royal Commission as to the future course of procedure. The Chairman proposed that every effort should be made to conclude the hearing of evidence by the end of the present year, with a view to framing a Report by the beginning of the next Parliamentary Session, or shortly afterwards. This proposal was opposed by Mr. Chaplin on the ground that there were parts of the country and some special subjects on which sufficient evidence had not been obtained by the Commission. After a prolonged discussion, it appears a majority of the Commission were in favour of Mr. Chaplin's view. The inquiry will now probably be protracted considerably beyond the period within which it was at one time anticipated it would be necessary. The final Report of the Commission may possibly not be ready before the Autumn of next year."

For two reasons he was greatly astonished when he saw that announcement. The first reason was, that an honourable understanding had previously been arrived at among the members of the Commission, that no communications whatever were to be made without the knowledge and sanction of the Commision as a whole; and the second reason was, that, in his judgment at all events, it was an inaccurate and misleading description of the proceedings. It turned out upon inquiry that the statement was sent to the Press, in violation of the understanding, by the Chairman himself, without the sanction or knowledge of the Commission. He (Mr. Chaplin) took the earliest opportunity of raising the question before the Commission, and they, upon his motion, agreed to send an amended communication to the Press. That was his answer to the allegations of the Prime Minister. Although he had for months at the hands of the Press of the country been subject to great obloquy in consequence of the statement he had quoted, he had hitherto refrained from taking any public action in the matter, solely because he was desirous of preventing, as far as possible, anything being known which would be likely to reflect discredit on a Royal Commission of which he was a member. But if the action of the Chairman of the Commission was to be made a handle by the Prime Minister, by the Leader of the Chairman's own party, for holding him up to condemnation before the agriculturists of the country, he owned his patience was exhausted, and he felt justified in vindicating himself in the way he had done. Having replied to the attacks upon him, perhaps the House would allow him to turn for a few moments to the general Amendment. No one could be surprised that his hon. Friend had thought it his duty to call marked attention to the prevailing distress which was witnessed in so many industries at the present time. What did seem strange to him was that, when they remembered what a deplorable condition the agricultural interest was in, when they knew that so many other interests were greatly depressed, and that vast numbers of people were being every day put out of employment, Her Majesty's Government showed no adequate sense of the urgency and gravity of the situation. It was quite impossible to exaggerate the gravity of the agricultural situation. It was reported that in almost every district of the country it was steadily and rapidly growing worse. Unfortunately, the latest information was to the effect that, although up to the present it had been the landlords and the tenant-farmers who had had to bear the brunt and the burden of the trouble, the effects of depression had now begun to reach the agricultural labourers themselves. Formerly there was the one bright spot on the agricultural horizon that the labourers were well employed, and that those who were employed received good wages and were suffering less than any other class. Now, he was reliably informed that in many of the agricultural counties the labourers were being paid off in great numbers. He was assured that, heavily as the farmers and landlords had suffered up to the present, it was upon the labouring classes in the agricultural districts that ultimately the chief losses from agricultural depression would fall. Why were the men being dsimissed from their employment? Unhappily, the reason was perfectly simple. It was that the farmers had not got, and could not obtain, from the banks or from any other source, the money with which to pay the wages. He knew of nothing in connection with country life more painful, more distressing, than the arrival of the day when one found himself, from very lack of means, totally unable to continue in employment those people it had been his privilege and good fortune to be able to employ on his estate perhaps for many years previously. Conceive the pitiable condition of the agricultural labourer deprived of his employment, of the means of obtaining food, clothing, and warmth? The information he had received was in the possession of the Government, and, therefore, it did seem passing strange that they had so completely ignored the existence of such a desperate condition of affairs. In answer to the Leader of the Opposition, the Chancellor of the Exchequer said the other night—

> "Well, but we can't do anything—we can't reasonably be expected to do anything—until the Royal Commission has reported."

Why not? The Royal Commission had published a vast deal of evidence both upon the causes and effects of the depression. Her Majesty's Government had special opportunities of being seised with all the information in possession of the Royal Commission, because one of themselves, one of the Members of the Cabinet, was Chairman and head of the Commission. They had the advantage of his knowledge and advice, and it was impossible for them to plead ignorance upon the subject. One of the questions before the Commission had been that of Light Railways. The Commission had not reported on that question, but that had not deterred the Government from dealwith it. Why should they not have dealt with infinitely more important matters? What became of the excuse of the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the Government could do nothing because the Royal Commission had not reported? Whether the action of Her Majesty's Government with respect to Light Railways was likely to be of any use was altogether another qnestion. Questions had been put as to the funds, the sources from which those Railways were to be created, and he thought those questions had hardly been answered. On one point they had very explicit information. The President of the Board of Trade called a great conference at the Board of Trade on the 7th of December, and the right hon. Gentleman said—

> "There was one question outside the scope of their deliberations—the question as to any aid by the Central Treasury of the country. He conceived that it was not a question fit for discussion in this place. He held a strong opinion upon it, and it was one on which he believed the mind of Parliament was absolutely settled, and they would not be spending their time to good purpose if they were to discuss a subject which was not likely to bear any good fruit. The objection to such a policy in a country like this, and in the present state of our revenue, in view of the competition which would at once arise in many parts of the country for such State aid, as well as the results which had followed from it in many of our Colonies and the United States, convinced them that it was a question they need not attempt to consider."

If that statement were true, and no change occurred in the mind of the Government on the subject, he feared that Light Railways, wherever constructed, would be very little of a boon. The distressed agriculturists were clamouring for relief, and the Government promised to add to their burdens. The distressed agriculturists asked for bread, and all the Government offered them was a new rate. Many questions had been discussed before the Agricultural Commission, but the most important of all was—To what causes was the agricultural depression due? The hon. Member for East Northampton, with that charitable view which he always took of the conduct of the classes whose great misfortune it was to be owners of land, expressed the opinion in the course of the Debate yesterday that the depression was actually due to the fact that the landlords were not prompt enough in making remissions of rent, and that in consequence the tenants had been losing year after year from £1 to £2 per acre of their capital. Let the House only think for a moment what a very small portion of the whole arable land of the country was let at all at £2 per acre. He had now been the owner for 30 years of a very large estate in a first-rate farming county, and he had never met a farm let for £2 per acre in the whole course of his life. To say that that was the cause of the agricultural depression was a statement which he should characterise—though he was ununwilling to say anything rude—as ridiculous in the extreme.

MR. CHANNING: If the right hon. Gentleman will allow me, I wish to say that I did not make that statement. What I intended to say, but said perhaps imperfectly, was, that the losses to the farmers amounted to about £1 or £2 per acre, and that owing to the delay in making reductions these losses had diminished their capital.

MR. CHAPLIN said, he was glad to hear that that was what the hon. Gentleman had intended to express, and having heard it he would not say what he had been going to say—that a more ungenerous statement had never been put before the public. But as the question of rent reductions had been raised, and as it was likely to receive a good deal of attention in the country, he desired to say a few words more upon it. He admitted that there might have been some exceptional cases in which, perhaps the reductions of rent had not been so prompt as they might have been. There were black sheep amongst landowners as there were in every class. But the whole mass of the evidence taken before the Agricultural Commission from witness after witness, and from the Sub-Commissioners, teemed with statements to the effect that reductions in rent varying from 20 to 50 and to 80 per cent., and even up to 100 per cent., had been freely and voluntarily made throughout the country, that the landlords in the vast majority of cases had behaved well and generously to their tenants, and that happily, even at the present time, the best of feelings existed between them. That was the unmistakable drift of the evidence of the great majority of witnesses before the Commission, and he defied any member of the Commission to contradict his statement. Reductions of rent might not have been given promptly in some cases, but the explanation was obvious. Every one who had any practical knowledge of land was aware that landlords who had never raised rents when seasons were prosperous did not think it necessary to reduce rents because a year or two years had been bad. The profits of good years had always been supposed to balance the losses of bad years. But when it was found that the depression was unhappily assuming the character of permanency substantial reductions were promptly given in most cases. These opinions of the liberality of the landlords were, he was glad to know, shared by multitudes of tenant-farmers, and were indicated in an honest genuine fashion by numbers of real practical agriculturists examined before the Agricultural Commission. The Commission had done their utmost by probing to the very bottom to ascertain what were the real causes of the existing depression. Every single witness and every single Sub-Commissioner, no matter what part of the country his duties may have taken him to, was practically unanimous upon the point that the depression which was working so much havoc at the present time was primarily due to the great fall in prices in agricultural produce. The witnesses also pointed out this—which was, perhaps, the most important and the most sinister feature of the situation—that the fall in prices was still steadily progressing, and every one of them without exception, agreed that until, by some means or other, that progressive fall in prices was stopped, there was no hope, or chance, or possibility, of a permanent improvement in the country. The Government were aware of all this; they had the evidence before them, and what, then, was there to prevent them from turning their attention at once to this most serious subject? The report of the Commission could do little to help them. He could not foreshadow what the nature of the report of the Commission might be. He believed it would be a report strictly in accordance with the evidence laid before it, and if that were so there could be little doubt as to what the drift of the report would be. But, putting that altogether on one side, it should be remembered that if the matter were to be dealt with at all it could only be dealt with by the Government of the day—by the present Government, or by some other Government which in years to come might succeed them. And further, it should be remembered that agriculture was not the only industry that was suffering at the present time.

On the contrary, the great difficulty at the present day, unhappily, was to find one industry that was flourishing in any degree. Take the iron industry. He did not profess to be acquainted with the circumstances of that great industry, but he knew that during the winter he had never taken up a paper without finding column after column under the heading "The ruin of the iron industry of the kingdom," in which the most startling statements as to the condition of that industry appeared. The great textile industries of the north of England were notoriously depressed also; and therefore it was not alone the agricultural labourers that were suffering from want of employment. It was only the other day that the following paragraph taken from the *Manchester Guardian*, was sent to him—

> "Our Blackburn correspondent telegraphs:—Notwithstanding the gift of £1,000 by Mr. Tattersall, J.P., the distress among the Blackburn poor is still pressing. The Mayor estimates that at least 2,000 families are suffering want, most of these being dependent upon outdoor employment, which has been stopped altogether for several weeks. The residence of Bishop Crame-Roberts and the police station are besieged by hundreds of applicants for relief, and over 300 applied at the Mayor's private residence in two hours."

And what was the cause of all this depression in trade? The same answer was returned in every case—the depression was ascribed to the fall in prices. The House would remember the coal strike of a few years ago, probably the most mischievous and injurious event to the community at large which had happened within the memory of the present generation. That strike was caused by an attempt on the part of the coalowners to lower wages. But why? Because of the great fall in prices. The House would find that every depressed industry, whether at home or abroad, owed its depression to the terrible and unprecedented fall in prices. Again, the agricultural depression was not limited to England. It existed also on the Continent of Europe; it was even worse in the United States; and in all those countries it had proceeded from precisely the same cause—the fall in the prices of agricultural produce. If these statements were founded upon truth—and he was certain that no Member of the House would attempt to deny them—and if all this widespread agricultural depression was to be ascribed to one and the same common cause, surely the Government ought to do its very best to ascertain to what this great and progressive fall in prices was due, and also whether it was not possible to do something earnest to relieve the depression. One common explanation, and one which he had frequently heard from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was that the fall in prices was due to the new inventions to facilitate production. On the last occasion there was a discussion on this subject, the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself ascribed the depression to the ingenuity of man. But the theory of over-production by this time was altogether exploded. He would ask the attention of the House to some remarkable circumstances connected with the wheat crop of the world. Fairly accurate estimates of the world's wheat crop were now made: and he had taken his figures from a publication called *The Corn Trade Review*. These figures did not greatly vary from those given by two or three other publications. In 1892 the wheat crop of the world was very considerably less than the crop in 1891, and it was accompanied by a fall in prices of no less than 18 per cent. In 1893 the crop was estimated to be just the same as the crop of 1891; but meantime there had been a large addition to the population of the world, and yet the fall in prices was 29 per cent. He was totally unable to reconcile these facts—if they were facts, as he believed, and not enormous exaggerations—with the theory of over-production. What the suffering industries of the country were asking at the present moment was this: would the Government look this question fairly in the face? Were they prepared to consider by what means it might be possible to arrest this constant fall in prices from which all classes of industry were suffering, and so to deal with what was the acknowledged root of all the evil? If the Government were willing to do this, well and good. But if the appeal was to be met again, as it had always been met before by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with a *non possumus*, with a statement that the question of prices was entirely beyond the pale of the Government's consideration—then all their pretended sympathy for the sufferings of agriculture or of any other industry was perfectly useless, and little better than a mockery and a farce. With all the energy at his command, and with all the deep conviction which he felt, he desired to press this fact upon the House of Commons. They must make up their minds to one of two things. They must either harden their hearts and be prepared to do something which would effectually stop the fall in prices; or else they must accept the complete and final ruin of the greatest industries in the country as an accomplished fact. He would next deal with some of the remedies which had been proposed for agriculture by the Government. They were easily disposed of, because they consisted of a system of light railways created at the expense of the rates. As to the textile industry of Lancashire, the attitude of the Government had been most peculiar, and, he should think, most unsatisfactory to Lancashire. The textile industry being sorely driven at the present time, the Government had selected this opportunity of imposing duties on the import of Lancashire goods into India. In his judgment that was the direct outcome of the policy of closing the Mints in India two years ago—a policy which the Government adopted against the strong remonstrances of many gentlemen on the Opposition side of the House, and the most vehement opposition of Lancashire. Such a policy was rendered necessary because the Government persistently ignored the repeated demands of the Indian Government and of Lancashire, made over and over again, that the silver question should be dealt with. Next as to the remedies proposed by some of the supporters of the Government. With respect to agriculture, the hon. Member for East Northamptonshire said in his speech that he was going to invite the attention of the Government to the question whether it would not be well to inquire into the whole subject of local taxation. There was inquiry again suggested. Inquiry had always been the specific of the Radical Party for anything in the nature of agricultural depression; and all that agriculture wanted now was action of some kind. What chance did the hon. Member think he had of obtaining the inquiry? Why did the Chancellor of the Exchequer, not many days ago, curtly refuse to receive a deputation from the Chamber of Agriculture on this very question, and at a time when the hon. Member for East Northamptonshire was President of the Chamber?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): It was because I took it for granted that the Royal Commission had fully inquired into this question, and were about to report upon it.

MR. CHAPLIN said, that the right hon. Gentleman was of a much more innocent and confiding character than had been supposed if he could seriously assure the House that he thought he would have the Report of the Royal Commission two months ago when the deputation was proposed. If there was any prospect of obtaining relief in this direction, he was the last person to say a word against it; but when he made a proposition of the same kind not very long ago the Chancellor of the Exchequer answered in a jaunty manner:—

> "If you demand relief of local taxation it rests with you to show where the relief is to come from."

If that were to be the answer to the hon. Member for East Northamptonshire's appeal, he had pledged himself too soon to support the Government on this Motion.

SIR W. HARCOURT: That is the very point which I wished to submit to the Royal Commission.

MR. CHAPLIN said, that he could prophesy that when the Royal Commission did report the right hon. Gentleman would find them to be practically unanimous in favour of some relief of local taxation. Let the right hon. Gentleman consult his colleague, and see whether he was prepared to dispute that proposition. The hon. Member was further going to ask the Government to sanction a loan of 12 millions on easy terms.

MR. CHANNING: I did not mention any sum.

MR. CHAPLIN said, that he should be glad to support so excellent a proposition; but he must withhold his commendations upon it until he had heard the Chancellor of the Exchequer's views on the subject. That exhausted the suggested remedies of the Government's supporters; now as to other remedies. Several minor propositions had been advanced which could not be considered remedies, but which would have an undoubtedly beneficial effect on Agriculture. They might be summed up in the programme put forward by the National Agricultural Union. There was first the Amendment of the Agricultural Holdings Act. He agreed that the Agricultural Holdings Act might very well be amended; but he was sure that it had little or nothing to do with the Agricultural depression. The whole body of evidence of tenant-farmers went to show that the most perfect Agricultural Holdings Act ever invented would do nothing to relieve the present depression. Then there was the relief of local burdens, the question of preferential railway rates, the application of the Merchandise Marks Act to food, and one or two other measures. He would now mention a proposition of his own, made, not for the first time in this House, which was not included in the programme of the National Agricultural Union. He believed it would give more material and immediate assistance to Agriculture than anything else at the present moment. Two years ago he urged upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer to consider the possibility of repealing the Beer Duty, and raising an equivalent Revenue by a duty on foreign barley. He seriously repeated that proposition now, and he believed that nothing would be of more material assistance, to the agricultural labourers especially. Wherever it was possible, barley was taking the place of wheat; and if his proposal were accepted it would help to keep the plough going, which was a matter of vital importance to the labourers. Something more could be done in the labourer's interest. There had been a vast increase in the last few years in the number of allotments in this country. On many allotments it would be found that the labourers grew barley. What was the objection to this proposal? He knew of no possible objection, unless it was the sentimental one that it would be Protection. What did he care about that? If he proposed a form of Protection that could do harm to no one, but which might be of advantage to agriculturists and labourers, to refuse his proposal by alleging the sentimental objection that it was Protection was a luxury which they certainly could not afford to indulge in. He now came to the question which underlay the trouble in the case of our different industries—namely, the phenomenal fall of prices from which they had suffered during the last few years. His own views on this subject were well known. He traced the fall for the most part not so much to a change in production, not to a change in commodities or in transport, as to the change which had occurred in the value of money itself, and which dated from the time when the great monetary changes were made on the Continent of Europe and in America 20 years ago. He knew that his views on this subject were shared by some of the profoundest thinkers in the world, by every teacher of political economy, he believed, in this country at the present time, and by many of the ablest men of business in the City and elsewhere. Those views deserved the careful attention of the Government. Hitherto they had been met by the contemptuous opposition of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who had never, he believed, been at the pains to examine and to sift them, and whose past utterances on the subject had invariably given him this impression.

Sir W. HARCOURT: You omit the late Prime Minister.

Mr. CHAPLIN said, the late Prime Minister was not a member of the Government.

Sir W. HARCOURT: Yes; but I remind the right hon. Gentleman that the late Prime Minister was the person who replied to the arguments of the right hon. Gentleman.

Mr. CHAPLIN said, he looked back with the greatest pleasure and admiration to the speech of that right hon. Gentleman, though he differed from the late Prime Minister's views. But the late Prime Minister did not meet his arguments with the contemptuous opposition which he complained of on the part of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer. He was convinced that the interest in this vast question was growing daily; and the right hon. Gentleman or one of his successors, sooner or later, would be compelled by the force of circumstances to deal with and face this question. Up to this moment, however, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had always sought to discredit the question in the House and in the country by pointing to the failure of the Conference which was held at Brussels two or three years ago, and by alleging that other nations would have nothing to do with it. He had shown in detail on more than one occasion that those statements were contrary to the fact. He had also shown that a careful study of the proceedings at Brussels proved that the Powers of Europe had evinced every willingness to consider the question, provided they received the smallest encouragement from England? and, secondly, the abortive results of that Conference were owing to the action of the English representatives at that time. It was a mere invention on the part of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to put aside the necessity for dealing with the question, which he believed the right hon. Gentleman dreaded and detested. One of the great questions occupying the attention of the German Parliament at present was the question of agricultural prices. The Prussian Minister of Agriculture made a most important speech on that subject quite recently, and his view was that no doubt bimetallism would be most beneficial to Agriculture, but they could not attempt to deal with it in the face of the opposition of England.

SIR W. HARCOURT: He did not say so.

MR. CHAPLIN said, the Prussian Minister of Agriculture was reported to have said so in the foreign correspondence of *The Times*. Then there was a significant statement made by the French Prime Minister on Sunday last. He was reported as follows :—

> "M. Ribot, replying to a question regarding the monetary crisis, said that a movement in favour of bimetallism had arisen in England, and he would use his best efforts to overcome opposition to that system in France, by which means he hoped that the country would return to the bimetallic system."

Every one knew that political authorities in the United States were sharply divided on the question whether the free coinage of silver should be attempted by America alone; but on the question of the free coinage of silver by International Agreement all parties and statesmen there were absolutely agreed. The method of procedure must be by another International Conference. What was the objection to it? What could be the objection to having the whole question thoroughly threshed out by the men most competent to do so and with an earnest desire to arrive at the real truth? One obstacle was the infatuation, the obstinacy, of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who had hitherto refused to consider the question, which, in his judgment, was vital to the interests of Agriculture in this country, to the cotton industries in Lancashire, to the interests of India, and to the workers and producers in all the industries of the Kingdom, and which, according to the highest possible Irish authority, lay at the root of the whole land question in Ireland. The subject was even more important to the farmers in Ireland than it was to the tenant-farmers here. He did not pledge himself to any of the details of this question at present; all he asked was that the Government should seriously consider it in relation to the views he had expressed. If the Powers of Europe were not unfriendly there was no need for the great, indefinite, and prolonged delay mentioned by the hon. Member for East Northamptonshire (Mr. Channing) as the necessary accompaniment of the question. He was persuaded that it was the only thing which stood between them and the practical ruin of the agricultural industry of the country. Could any hon. Member suggest any other proposal for its salvation? If his proposals should be accepted, and by the means he had endeavoured to indicate, then he believed they might hope to see the dawn of brighter and happier times for the ancient industry of Agriculture and all the other industries in the Kingdom, as well as for the workers and producers throughout the Kingdom as a whole.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. G. J. SHAW-LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central) said, the right hon. Gentleman began his speech by referring to the attack which the Prime Minister had made upon him in another place, and also by making a severe attack on himself with reference to matters which had occurred in the Royal Commission. The right hon. Gentleman did not appear to be certain of the words used by Lord Rosebery, and he would therefore read them :—

> "I do not know his motives. I am sure they were high-minded; but, as the motives of Party Politicians on both sides of the House are always open to question and to suspicion, I could wish that in the exercise of his high discretion he had thought it well to hasten and not to retard the Report of that Commission."

He associated himself entirely with the remarks of Lord Rosebery. He had never for a moment questioned the motives of the right hon. Gentleman. He still thought that he would have done better if he had assisted in bringing the proceedings of the Commission to a conclusion at an earlier date; but he had not suggested that in taking the line he had taken the right hon. Gentleman was influenced by any unworthy motives; he had no doubt the right hon. Gentleman thought he was acting in accordance with the best interests of the great industry which he represented. With regard to his own action, from the commencement he advised that the Commission should somewhat limit its inquiry. The Duke of Richmond's Commission lasted for four years. It examined a multitude of witnesses, appointed an immense number of Sub-Commissions, and cost a large sum of money. The result was that a great deal of the value of that Commission was dissipated, much of the evidence having become obsolete. He tried, if possible, to avoid the fate of the Richmond Commission, and from the first, to the best of his ability, he urged upon the Commission that it should not endeavour to cover the whole country with Sub-Commissions, but should endeavour to take a selected area of England and Scotland, endeavour to obtain full reports, and then report within a reasonable time. Under those circumstances the House would have been in full possession of the facts of the subject, and able to deal with it. In June last he ventured to point out to the Commission that the time was coming when it would be necessary to come to some conclusion, and the evidence brought to a termination. He pointed out that it would be perfectly possible to present the Report at the commencement of the Session. The right hon. Gentleman took a somewhat different view, but the majority agreed that the evidence should be closed towards the end of the then year. When the Commission met in November he again raised the question as to the termination of the proceedings, with the view of the presentation of the Report early in the present year. The right hon. Gentleman urged his arguments to the contrary, and the majority of the Commission agreed with the right hon. Gentleman.

MR. CHAPLIN said the reason he objected to the closing of the evidence was that no evidence at all had been taken on several very important subjects.

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE said that, in his opinion, that evidence might have been dealt with in the few weeks that remained before the end of the year. He sent in the ordinary manner to the Secretary of the Commission a short record of what took place, and he (Mr. Shaw-Lefevre) took full responsibility for the paragraph which appeared in the papers. That paragraph was an accurate and fair representation of what took place, but the right hon. Gentleman took exception to it, as he thought it had given rise to some misconception as to his attitude in the matter. If there was misconception on one side, there was misconception on the other, for he was charged with having attempted to burke inquiry. He was sorry that there was any misconception. At the next meeting the point was discussed, and he should read the Minute then drawn up. He thought the House would see that there was little difference between the two. This was the Minute which the Commission agreed to as a fair record of what took place:—

"The Chairman commenced the proceedings of the day by reviewing the points remaining to be considered by the Commission. He said that a great mass of evidence had been taken, and the Sub-Commissioners had reporte do nnumerous districts. There were only three counties in England in respect of which no evidence had been taken or reports made. He enumerated 14 subjects of enquiry which, he thought, had been thoroughly exhausted in the evidence, including the Agricultural Holdings Acts, judicial rents, adulteration of farm products, marking of foreign meat, importation of foreign cattle, &c. He pointed out that, if the Commission sat twice a week till December 21, there would be 14 more days for evidence. He considered that, if witnesses in future were not examined or cross-examined at such length as in the past on these topics, it would be possible to deal with the remaining points of inquiry in the time named. He held it was unnecessary to take evidence from Wales in view of the fact that a Royal Commission has been specially inquiring into the Welsh land question, and their evidence was already published. He thought that 14 days would be sufficient for the evidence from Scotland and on all other matters remaining to be dealt with. If the Commission should think this sufficient, the Christmas

> Recess could then be employed in preparing a Report, and the Commission would then be able to consider its Report when Parliament meets in February. This proposal was opposed by Mr. Chaplin on the grounds specified in the Resolution which appears upon these Minutes, and which he handed in to the Chairman in the following terms:—'In view of the fact that there remains 20 counties in England from which no evidence by tenant-farmers has been given; that ten of those counties have not been visited by any Sub-Commissioner; that six witnesses only have at present been heard from Scotland; that no inquiry into agricultural depression has at present been made in Wales; and that little, and in some cases no, evidence has as yet been taken with regard to various special subjects such as:—(*a*) The agricultural position of foreign countries which compete with the United Kingdom; (*b*) the probable future of foreign competition with which English agriculturists must reckon; (*c*) the extent of derelict land in the counties of Great Britain; (*d*) the effect of foreign bounties; (*e*) the possible extension of dairy farming in Great Britain, and various other subjects, it would be premature during the present year to adopt any decision which would limit the taking of evidence for the future.' After a prolonged discussion, in which a majority of the Commission were of opinion that it would not be possible to complete the evidence within the time named, the Chairman withdrew his suggestion. It was then proposed that the final paragraph of Mr. Chaplin's Resolution should be put to the Commission."

He need not read more. He thought then, and he thought now, that the Commission made a mistake in not agreeing to bring the evidence to a conclusion. There the matter stood. He entirely disclaimed any breach of faith with the right hon. Gentleman in sending the paragraph to the papers, and he could only assure the House that it was done in the ordinary course of business, and that he had not the slightest intention of casting any discredit on the right hon. Gentleman. He should have been much better pleased if the Minute finally agreed to had been sent to the papers in place of the paragraph, as it explained the difference between himself and the right hon. Gentleman. The right hon. Gentleman suggested that the Commission should go to Edinburgh, a proposition which he thought was unnecessary, and that, if necessary, it should have been sent in the previous autumn. Again the majority of the Commission was against him. The right hon. Gentleman suggested that the Commission should go to Wales, but considering the operations of the Welsh Land Commission, he did not think it a wise action to go to Wales. Again the Commission were against him. The result of all this was that the Report of the Commission could not be presented until somewhat late in the present year, whereas, if it had followed his advice, the Report would have been presented before now. In the interests of Agriculture he thought that was a misfortune, and that it would have been wiser to come to a conclusion so that Parliament might have been able to deal with the subject at an early day this Session. He thought he had shown, therefore, that the right hon. Gentleman had, in fact, retarded the adoption of the Report of the Royal Commission, though he in no way imputed improper motives. He could only say that if his own views had been acted upon that Report might have been issued early in the present Session. That disposed of the personal part of the question. In regard to the existing agricultural depression, he desired to say, as the Chairman of the Royal Commission, that he had not the slightest wish to depreciate the gravity of the present position of matters. From the first he had admitted the gravity of the misfortune. During the recess he had visited the County of Essex and other parts, and he could confirm all that had been said by Mr. Pringle in his Report, that a serious crisis had arisen which deserved the most careful consideration. He was enabled to do some good by his visit to the agriculturists of Essex, because he was able to show that the assessments on the land for Poor Law purposes had not been reduced in proportion to the extent the land had depreciated in value. In a letter to the *Times* at the time he pointed out that the law had not been carried out in this respect by the Assessment Committee, and he had reason to believe that in consequence of that letter the assessments on land in that county had been reduced. He found, however, that the existing depression was not of recent date, but had been going on and increasing for the past ten years. The worst part of the difficulty was that much of the land had been allowed to get into such neglected condition that it would take a large amount—from £8 to £10 an acre—to bring it back into cultivation, and, having regard to the taxes, it would seem to be hardly worth while to expend that amount upon it for the purpose. The right hon. Gentleman had stated that the Government might have proposed legislation to the house to deal with the difficulty, although the Royal Commission had not reported. But how was it reasonably possible that the Government could introduce legislation on subjects which were still under the consideration of the Commission, and on which they were still receiving evidence day by day? For the first time the right hon. Gentleman had then stated that he was in favour of an amendment of the Agricultural Holdings Act.

Mr. CHAPLIN said, he had stated the fact many times.

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE said, he could state positively that the right hon. Gentleman had not made such a statement on the Commission.

Mr. CHAPLIN said, he must ask the right hon. Gentleman not to lead the House to believe that they had considered the question whether there was to be an amendment of the Agricultural Holdings Act or not.

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE said, he would admit that, but what he contended was that the subject had already been exhausted, and that when the hon. Member for Northamptonshire moved on the Commission just before Christmas that the Commission should make an interim Report with a view to legislation in the coming Session, the right hon. Member for Sleaford opposed that Motion, and the result was that the Government were therefore prevented from taking action before the Commission fully reported.

Mr. CHAPLIN said, the right hon. Gentleman should not omit to state that the Motion did not meet with any support, and that he himself did not support it.

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE admitted that this statement was quite accurate. But how did the circumstance come about? The right hon. Member for Sleaford declared that he would offer the most strenuous resistance to the making of an interim Report, and thereupon he, as Chairman of the Commission, said that, though he approved the proposal of the hon. Member for Northamptonshire, yet that it was contrary to precedent for a Commission to make an interim Report upon highly controversial matters, and in face of the strong opposition of the right hon. Member for Sleaford he could not advise the Commission to take that course. Another question which had been referred to in the Debate was that of Local Rating, on which the Commission had heard much evidence. The right hon. Gentleman had said that he thought the Commission would report unanimously in favour of a reduction of local rates. That might be probable, because, theoretically, everybody was in favour of the reduction of local rates. But the difficulty was as to the scheme of reduction, and that very grave difficulty had had not yet been considered by the Commission. In a short time he hoped to be able to call before the Commission a competent witness from the Local Government Board to explain the difficulties of the matter. On this point he might also state that he hoped in the course of a few days to lay on the Table of the House an interesting statement showing the course of local rating during the last 20 years, and the Return would make a comparison, for a definite number of years, between the assessments in each Union throughout the country on land, railways, and house property. It would show that the assessments on land had largely decreased in consequence of the Agricultural depression, while those on other property had largely increased, the decrease in the one case being almost balanced by the increase in the other. Therefore, if any additional relief was given by the State to local rates through increased subventions, the benefit would go far more to other property than to landed property. Let them suppose, for instance, that the State was in a position to give five millions in an additional subvention to the relief of the rates—one million only of it would go in aid of the land, while four millions would go to the relief of the assessments on other property. Moreover, the five millions would have to be raised by taxation on the whole community. Depressed as Agriculture was, the agricultural classes still comprised one-fifth or one-sixth of the total population, and therefore they would have in such a case to raise in taxation almost as much as they would receive in benefit from such a subvention. These considerations showed that it would not be easy as hon. Members opposite supposed to give further relief to Agriculture by means of State subventions in aid of local rates. Another proposal made with a view to relieving local rates was that other property besides land, houses, and railways should be included in the local assessments. But would a change of that kind be really to the interest of the farmers of this country? The main property found in local districts other than land, houses, and railways was farming stock. Would it be to the interest of farmers that that kind of property should be assessed for local rating? The only effect would be to impose an additional burden upon farmers for the benefit of the owners of lands, houses, and railways. Yet another proposal was that, instead of confining assessment to the actual property in a given district, they should assess all personal property, wherever situated, which was held by persons living in that district. Would a method of rating of that kind be beneficial to the farming interest? He thought not, for, in the first place, all the capital of farmers would have to be rated; and, in the second place, railway companies would no longer be rated locally. The question of rating was one of the most difficult questions that could be brought under the consideration of the House. He trusted that the Royal Commission, of which he was Chairman, would be able to deal with that subject among others, but no human being could justly find fault with the Government for not attempting to grapple with so difficult a matter at the present moment. The right hon. Gentleman opposite had made some comments upon the circumstance that the Government were proposing to deal with the subject of Light Railways although it was under the consideration of the Royal Commission. He attached, himself, the greatest importance to the construction of Light Railways, believing that 20 or 30 millions could be spent with good results on their extension. In the Lower House of the Prussian Diet the Minister for Agriculture, in a speech on the subject of the agrarian crisis, had declared that the existing depression was of an international character, and that agriculturists must endeavour to overcome the existing difficulties by ability, tenacity, and economy; and the same Minister had laid stress on the necessity of extending the present network of inland communication. This showed that the Minister for Agriculture in Germany had arrived at the same conclusion as the Government had here—namely, that one of the most important things that could be done for Agriculture was the extension of railway communication. The right hon. Gentleman had ended his speech, as he had ended many others in that House, with a statement of his views on the subject of bimetallism. He had no doubt that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would deal with that statement in his customary effectual manner before the Debate closed. For his part, he wished that he could agree with the right hon. Gentleman that the depression of Agriculture was due to the scarcity of gold. If he could only come to that conclusion he should have great confidence in the future.

MR. CHAPLIN explained that his contention was that the depression of Agriculture was due to the fall in prices.

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE said, that all were agreed as to that, but then came the question, "What was the fall in prices due to?" There were two main causes to which the fall in prices might be assigned. The view of bimetallists was that it was due to the scarcity of gold and to differences of currency and exchange, and the other view was that it was due to increased production and to improved means of communication. If present low prices were due to the scarcity of gold the difficulty was in course of being removed, because during the last four or five years the production of gold had been increasing rapidly. But he did not think, himself, that the low price of wheat and other things was due to that cause. His opinion was that it was due to the multiplication of inventions, and to the increase of railways in the Argentine Republic, in Southern Russia, in the Western States of America, and in other corn-growing districts. These were the circumstances which accounted for the increased importation of foreign products. He thought it rather unfortunate that the right hon. Gentleman should have raised the bimetallic question before the Royal Commission, but as he had done so the Commission, he thought, must consider it. With the right hon. Gentleman the question of bimetallism was a fixed idea, and he hardly ever delivered a speech without introducing the subject. He would venture to point out, in conclusion, that, although low prices were undoubtedly at this moment the cause of great suffering to the agricultural interest, yet they were, on the other hand, the cause of infinite blessing to a vast multitude of the labouring people throughout the country. He would say without fear of contradiction that at this moment the average condition of the labouring people of this country was infinitely better than it had ever been in the past. He would ask the right hon. Gentleman to make a comparison with the years 1871–73. He supposed that in the commercial history of this country there never was a period of greater prosperity than the years 1871–73. Prices were rising rapidly, trade was improving by leaps and bounds, and there were many other evidences of prosperity; yet he ventured to think that a careful comparison of the last three years with the years to which he had referred would show that the great bulk of the labouring people of this country were better off now than they were then. Since that time an addition of 7,000,000 had been made to the population, representing 140,000 heads of families, three-fourths of whom belonged to the working classes, and yet he believed that there were fewer men out of employment now than in the years 1871–73. Pauperism had been reduced by at least one-half, wages had been increased in money, and still more by the value men could get for their money. Again, the average consumption of meat per head of the population had increased in the same period by 15 per cent., of sugar by 62 per cent., of tea by 30 per cent., and of tobacco by 19 per cent. All these facts showed, to his mind, that there was a silver lining to this black cloud of depression which was overlying agriculture, and that even the agricultural population were infinitely better off now than in the prosperous period of 1871–73. He would, therefore, ask the House to hesitate before they endeavoured to raise prices artificially. The country, as a whole, was gaining by low prices, and for his part, he would endeavour to resist to the best of his power any attempt to raise prices artificially. No doubt there were many people out of work in different parts of the country, but, taking the country as a whole, unquestionably the state of things was better than it was last year, and still better than the year before. The distress had been aggravated by the severe weather, which had pressed hardly on out-of-doors employments; but he undertook to say that the condition of the country was better than in the past two years, and though the depression in prices was causing loss to agricultural producers, that depression in prices was, in the main, of advantage to the country.

*MR. J. KEIR HARDIE (West Ham, S.) said, he could not take the same roseate view of the situation as the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down. The right hon. Gentleman had been unfortunate in his comparison. He was old enough to remember the period to which he had referred, and in 1871 he was engaged as a miner. From 1871 to 1874 the wages of a miner averaged 8s. a day in the districts he was acquainted with, whereas they were now no more than 4s. to 4s. 6d. Neither could he agree that the working population were better off to-day than ever before. Employment to-day was more precarious and intermittent. A man over middle age found it almost impossible to find employment when from any cause he happened to be dismissed. The conditions under which industries were conducted compelled production to be carried on quickly and cheaply, which led to the displacement of men no longer in the flush of youth. It might be true that more tea and sugar and other luxuries were being consumed, but that did not necessarily point to prosperity. He should put it down to exactly the opposite cause. He knew the country districts of Scotland where tea had taken the place of more substantial food, and in the poorer districts of London weak tea was the staple article of diet, because people could not afford more wholesome food. He wished briefly to speak on that part of the Amendment which dealt with the unemployed. He had intended to specially raise the question by an Amendment, but, as he had been informed, by a misunderstanding the Mover of this Amendment had included the question of the unemployed, he had been precluded from moving his own Amendment. By altering the form he could have done so, but in view of the offer of a Committee he was prepared to wait for the result before pressing the matter to an extreme point. There was, he thought, a little confusion as to what constituted a person out of employment. It seemed to him that a person who was accustomed to earn wages and was for the time being prevented from following his occupation was a person out of employment. There were three classes, namely, those out of work from seasonal causes, those who were casual labourers, and those who were out of work through depression in trade—and any remedy proposed would require to meet all three cases and deal with them separately. There could not be two opinions as to the main cause of the want of employment. If the wealth which was being produced were also being distributed, want of employment would be an impossibility. He was certainly surprised to hear the right hon. Gentleman opposite say that the numbers of the unemployed were less than two or three years ago. He had endeavoured to make special inquiry in different parts of the country by consulting those persons who were most likely to know, and with one consent they said that never within their experience was the question of want of employment so pressing as at the present time; and the fact that the Government had been compelled to promise the appointment of a Committee belied the statement of the right hon. Gentleman. A certain number of Trade Unions made Reports to the Board of Trade, stating what proportion of their Members were receiving out-of-work pay, and last month that proportion was 7·5 per cent. out of a membership of a million and a quarter. This showed the number of unionists out of work to be over 86,000. Any employer would bear him out that, among those who were not organised, and who were outside of trade unions, the proportion of out-of-works was always higher than it was in the unions. The intelligent and skilled workmen were those who were members of a trade union, and these generally received the first consideration at the hand of the employers. If 7 per cent. of trade unionists were out of work, it was not unfair to assume that 8 per cent. of non-unionists would also be idle. That percentage would represent close on a million of non-workers, and would bring up the total to 1,086,000. It might be said that in the domestic and professional callings the proportions of unemployed were smaller. But an advertisement for a clerk at 20s. or 25s. a week would bring in hundreds of applications; and large numbers of women were living a life of shame because they had not the opportunity to earn an honest living. The lack of employment pressed in certain localities with undue severity; and he himself represented one of the worst localities in the country. In West Ham there were men and women literally sinking into premature graves in working for the relief of those unable to obtain work. When the Prime Minister went to the East End he received a deputation who told him that there were 5,000 unemployed in West Ham. His Lordship expressed surprise, and said that did not agree with the information he had received, presumably from the Local Government Board. Since then there had been a complete canvass of the Borough, and returns had been obtained on forms which had been left at every house, and of which copies were open to the inspection of hon. Members. The returns showed that there was a working population of 44,690, of whom 28,383 were in more or less regular work, while 6,176 were occasionally employed, and earning perhaps an average of 10s. a week, and 10,131 were totally unemployed, probably 25 per cent. having been out of employment continuously for 18 months or two years. The proportion of the unemployed in the building trades who would be affected by the severe weather was very small indeed; and it might be said that 97 per cent. of the unemployed were out of work owing to the prevailing depression in trade, and not in consequence of the severe weather. In Islington there were reported to be 9,000 out of work; and in other parts of London the number was very great. In the provincial towns matters were not much better. In Sunderland 5,000 were reported to be out of employment. A census of Bradford, taken last year, showed that the number of workers totally unemployed was 9,869, and the partially unemployed numbered 11,944. The average period during which persons had been unemployed was 12 weeks and 2 days. These facts constituted a serious state of affairs. In the coal-mining districts trade was bad, and was growing worse. Pits were being stopped in Wales, and short time was being worked in England and Scotland. In the tin industry of Wales matters were in a deplorable condition. He read the other day that a deputation of workers went to an employer and offered to accept a reduction of 12½ per cent. upon their former wages if he would open his works; but he had to confess that even at that reduction he could not open the works permanently. In the cotton industry the outlook was alarming. So this was not only a question of men being out of work from temporary causes, but it was a case of our whole industrial system breaking down from one cause or another. He was glad to find that at length the Government recognised the fact that in future it would be the business of the Government to endeavour to re-create our industrial system so that starvation from the want of employment should be almost impossible. Could it be wondered at that the millions who were badly fed and clothed, and who had no hope for the morrow, should sink to the depths of despair and become loafers? Would it be surprising that these people should seek to settle the question for themselves if the Government did not? We could not afford to be ignorant of the great force of discontent which must be dealt with in one way or another. He had indicated that in his opinion nothing short of an entire reorganisation of our industrial system on a Socialistic basis would meet the difficulty permanently; but the people out of work could not wait for this. It was incumbent on us from the point of view of humanity to do something to meet the case as it presents itself to-day. As regarded season trades, authorities might do much by giving work to do out of the ordinary season; and in this respect the London County Council had set an excellent example, which might well be followed by other bodies, including the Government. The Government might also do something with the 12 or 13 million acres of waste lands, the afforestation of which would enable us to grow wood, which we now imported to the amount of £17,000,000 or £18,000,000 worth a year. This would provide employment which would enrich all classes of the community. Experiments should be tried on the lines of making the land of England produce the food of its people. Whether that was impossible remained to be seen. We might, at all events, find out whether a thousand men could not, under ordinary conditions, provide themselves and their dependants with the necessaries of life. These were some of the remedies which might be applied immediately. He urged that the question should be dealt with promptly and effectively by the Committee to be appointed; there was no reason why, within a fortnight, there should not be some substantial relief afforded to centres in which depression prevailed. The Local Authorities were overburdened with taxation and unable to meet the circumstances; our workhouses were overcrowded, and it was an insult to the working classes that when they received relief in the form of work they should lose the rights of citizenship in consequence. It was essential to any reform respecting the unemployed, first, that honourable work should be provided, not oakum picking and stone breaking, which were done by criminals; secondly, that the wages paid should be the current trade union wages prevailing in the particular trade or occupation; and, thirdly, the work should not entail any disability of any kind. If these three conditions were observed, and the Committee realised the gravity of the situation and reported to the House without delay, then he believed the gentlemen of England on both sides of politics would feel it to be their duty not to make this a Party question, but to consider it from the point of view of common humanity and take whatever action might be necessary to remove the darkest stain on our national escutcheon.

*Sir C. W. DILKE regarded with alarm the proposal of the Government with reference to a Committee on this subject, but congratulated the hon. Member for West Ham (Mr. Keir Hardie), who had hitherto been driven from pillar to post, that he had at last got his way upon one point, which was a way in which he (Sir C. W. Dilke) entirely agreed. Two years ago the then Prime Minister, when asked to appoint a Committee to report to the House on this matter, said,

"It was an attempt to transfer from the

> Local Authorities to the House of Commons certain duties which should be discharged by the Local Authorities."

He added that,

> "There was no need for the appointment of such a Committee, because the whole subject was before the Labour Commission, who would report upon it.

The Labour Commission reported upon it fully, but the great drawback of all these inquiries was that they took place over and over again, and the hon. Member was indeed a sanguine man if he thought that within a fortnight from that day the Committee would have been appointed and have presented even an interim Report on the question raised in his speech. Upon part of the question all the facts were in the possession of Parliament, having been obtained by at least two Royal Commissions. The hon. Member for West Ham (Mr. Keir Hardie) was driven from pillar to post both last year and in 1893. He pressed one particular point with immense pertinacity on two successive Presidents of the Local Government Board—namely, that Boards of Guardians should have power to obtain land for land colonies, which had been so successful in Germany and Holland and other parts of the world. It appeared that the power nominally existed, but the Statutes on the subject were old and unworkable. On this point the hon. Member had got his way, for upon it it would be possible for the Committee to immediately make an interim Report and for legislation to be initiated. Passing to the larger question, he heard with some alarm what fell from the Leader of the House. Let him take the case of his (Sir C. W. Dilke's) own constituency, as a man knew his own constituency best. There were no unemployed in the ordinary sense of the word in it, but a great many people following industries which were declining, in which the employers' profits were becoming smaller and smaller and the wages earned less and less. They were small freeholders, so did not starve. Some of them sold their homes and went to the United States. But these people and others would object to be taxed for the benefit of special districts where the unemployed class existed, and the effect of subsidies being got from the local rates would be to increase the number of the unemployed in the urban districts, and alter the whole tendency of the last few years to try and improve the life of the rural districts and to keep people in them. Directly it got abroad in his constituency that large sums out of the Imperial taxes were to be spent, say, at Cardiff, which was not far off, on behalf of the unemployed, many of the people would go to Cardiff. Therefore, while there was ground for immediate legislation to enable Boards of Guardians to establish labour colonies and try an experiment many wished to see tried, on the other hand he feared there might be hurried legislation on the larger question, which was one that ought not to be dealt with in a hurried way.

SIR J. GORST (Cambridge University) expressed regret at the course taken by the Government. He was afraid the subject would be hung up for another year. He did not think the Government appreciated the extreme importance and urgency of this question. He had long looked upon it as a most important social question which pressed for solution by the present Parliament; and at the present moment perhaps the necessity for some action on the part of the Government of the country was possibly a little more urgent than it had ever been before. But it was an urgency which had been resting upon Parliament and the Government of the country for the last five or six years. The statistics of Mr. Charles Booth had been before the country for the last five years, and had never been substantially attacked. In those statistics he showed that in the East End of London no less than 35·5 of the population—more than one-third—were in a condition of chronic and perpetual poverty through being out of work, and when the statistics were extended to the whole of London, including the whole of the healthy West End, there were 30·7 per cent. of the population in a chronic state of poverty. The President of the Local Government Board had talked about pauperism decreasing. The poorhouses in London were never so full as they were at the present time, those sheltered in them having to sleep two in a bed and on the floor. Perhaps the worst case of all was that of Greenwich, which was inhabited by many of the class of casual labourers, and the workhouse there was so crammed that it was a disgrace to our Poor Law Administration. He was quite aware that London was not the only town in the United Kingdom in which the question of the unemployed had arisen. He, however, had had personal experience of the state of things that existed in the Metropolitan districts, and he was speaking from knowledge of the facts and not from mere hearsay. He believed that the feelings of the unemployed would be seriously embittered when they became aware that the Government instead of attempting to deal with their case proposed to refer the subject to a Select Committee, or, perhaps, to a Royal Commission. He had had a large experience of Select Committees and of Royal Commissions, and he had a most unfavourable opinion of their working. The late Mr. Disraeli used to say that an inquiry by a Royal Commission was an expensive and an elaborate mode of discovering something that everybody knew; and he believed that Mr. Disraeli was quite right in taking that view. He knew that when a Government was not prepared to deal with a question, or desired to hang it up indefinitely, a Royal Commission was invariably resorted to; and he believed that the Government merely proposed to refer this subject to a Select Committee because they did not know what to do with it and had no policy to declare with regard to it. The Government, in order to gain time and to avoid announcing some line of action in connection with this question, had resorted to this old form of delay, and had proposed to refer the whole matter to a Select Committee. What the Government ought to do was to instruct their permanent advisers in such matters to prepare some plan for dealing with the subject; and, if they did so, such a plan, which would doubtless be satisfactory to the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board and to every Member of that House, would be forthcoming within a very short period. The principles upon which such a plan should be based should be to give to the local authorities power to make experiments in giving relief to the unemployed. It was not as though the local bodies were unfit to deal with these questions, because the Boards of Guardians in London were peculiarly qualified to do so: far more so, in fact, than a Select Committee of the whole House would be. If they were empowered to make experiments in the treatment of the unemployed, labour colonies would be speedily established, and plans put into execution for the reclamation of waste lands and for carrying out other useful projects. He had been much struck at a meeting of the unemployed that he had attended by finding that the men altogether condemned the principle of doles, of free meals, and of other forms of charity, and that they equally condemned the institution of useless and unremunerative works for the purpose of giving them relief. The men pleaded that power should be given to the local authorities to initiate useful and productive work. He believed that if the Government were to take steps to empower the local authorities to try experiments in the direction he had indicated, they would be doing far more good than they would accomplish by referring this subject to a Select Committee.

Mr. E. H. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) said, that the House must have listened with much sympathy to the speech of the hon. Member for West Ham. As one of the Representatives of the East of London, he could say that his own observation, and the information he had received, fully confirmed the statement of the hon. Member as to the urgency of the need that existed for taking measures for the relief of the unemployed in that part of the Metropolis. On behalf of himself, and of the hon. Members who were associated with him, and who had been pressing the Government to give them a pledge to deal with this question of the unemployed, he felt justified, in view of the important announcement that had been made that afternoon, in accepting the proposal of the Government to appoint a Committee to inquire into the subject. The right hon. Gentleman opposite had suggested that the object of the Government in making the proposal was to enable them to delay making any announcement on the question, and if they had proposed to appoint a Royal Commission he might have been disposed to agree with him; but a Committee was a very different thing, and might speedily bring their inquiry to a conclusion. There was one part of the subject, however, with which the Government might have dealt without making any inquiry, and that was the one that related to the creation of a Joint Board for the whole Metropolis. At present the Metropolis was divided up into some 40 Sanitary Districts and 30 distinct Poor Law Unions; and the consequence was that the question of the relief of the unemployed could only be dealt with piecemeal. As the hon. Member for West Ham had said, the word "unemployed" was used in many different, and sometimes confusing, senses. For the moment he desired to look upon the unemployed as those who, as a rule, were in employment, and who were only thrown out of work during periods of exceptional depression and distress. Such persons undoubtedly deserved the sympathy of the community at large. The highly organised Trades Unions were able to make some provision for those of their members who were out of work, but that provision left almost entirely untouched the great mass of half-skilled and unskilled labour, whose Unions, if indeed they had them, did not receive such contributions as would enable them to provide out-of-work benefit. Now, in the employment of the class of persons to whom he referred there were three conditions which must be satisfied in any feasible plan. In the first place, the work must be *bona-fide* work and must not be useless or degrading work, and it must provide the means for those persons to return to their normal avocations. Secondly, the persons so employed must not be brought into direct relations with the Guardians, for that weuld be the first step in the facile descent to permanent dependence upon the Poor Law. And, thirdly—and probably this was the most important—the cost should be defrayed either wholly or in part by a common charge over the whole Metropolis. How could those conditions best be carried out in a practical proposal? He relied very much on the recommendations of the well-known circular which had more than once been issued from the Local Government Board. He desired really to effect that co-operation to which the circular referred, between the Boards of Guardians and the Vestries. Within the limits of their meagre resources, the London Vestries, he ventured to say, had dealt with the unemployed question in a business-like manner and with fair success. Indeed, the success of relief works was largely dependent on supervision and administration. They wanted more foremen and more gangers, but not a harsher discipline than in the case of ordinary workmen. And so far as the Vestries had succeeded, they had relieved the burdens of the Guardians and had spared the poor rate. It seemed to him, therefore, a strong case was made out for the Guardians being empowered, under proper safeguards, to make contributions in aid of the cost of relief works executed by the Sanitary Authorities in their districts. But that contribution should not be defrayed exclusively by the local rate, for the unemployed after all were not the unemployed of St. George's, or Shoreditch, or Bethnal Green, they were the unemployed of the Metropolis as a whole. The cost, therefore, should be a common charge, and as a practical suggestion, he proposed that it should be charged upon the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund. Legislation would be required. That legislation would authorise the Local Government Board to make the regulations under which the money would be contributed and the work carried out, and in those regulations and in the supervision of the Local Government Board there would be precisely the same safeguards which existed now for all that common expenditure which was charged on the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund. The London Member with whom he was associated, had put this suggestion before the Government. Of course their proposition did not profess to cover the whole question of the unemployed; what it did was simply to provide the machinery under which, under a common charge, the Metropolis might be able to deal with one part and one part only of the question. One other point. The regulations of the Local Government Board were rather out of date and needed to be revised, in order to bring them into harmony with the industrial and social changes which had taken place since they were framed. And here he should like to find in the Local Government Board a more genial reception of Boards of Guardians who desired to make experiments. There had been cases in which a tendency had been shown to crush in the bud any suggestion of this kind proceeding from a Board of Guardians.

the Government was sapped. ["No, no."] That was undeniable if the recent elections were any test. A good deal had been said about filling up the cup. Speaking as a Lancashire cotton manufacturer, and as the Member for an important Cheshire constituency, he felt that not only was the cup of the Government full, but it was brimming over.

Mr. W. P. BYLES (Yorkshire, W.R., Shipley), was glad the hon. Member for Stockport had reminded the House that there were other industries besides Agriculture which were in a depressed condition. The operatives of Lancashire and Yorkshire were suffering as much as the farmers and labourers in rural districts, and if Parliament were asked to do anything for agriculture, the factory districts might fairly claim to have as much done for them. It appeared to him the hon. Member for Hampshire (Mr. Jeffreys) had fallen into a fallacy; he had confounded the interest of the land with the interest of agriculture. Land was one thing and agriculture was another thing. The hon. Member for Hampshire pleaded for a lightening of the burdens upon land, but it appeared to him (Mr. Byles) that the only title a landowner had to receive rent at all for the land of the country was that he should bear the burdens of the State. But he would pass to a question in which he took the deepest interest—the question of the unemployed. Why were men unemployed? Because they were denied the natural opportunities of earning their living. A larger number than ever of the people of this country were dependent upon wages. That was to say that they were unable to supply themselves with the necessaries of life by any other means than by inducing some person to pay them wages for their labour. All an unemployed man could do was to walk from place to place asking some one to give him work. As he walked along the high road he might meet with a turnip-field, but he dare not enter the field and take a turnip, no matter how hungry he might be. The sheep, for which the turnips were growing, were thought of far greater importance than the hungry man on the roadside. He might not snare a rabbit, or take a fish out of a stream. He might not do anything except to walk from place to place until he got some one to give him work, and if he failed in that all he had to do was to starve. There was a story told of a Lancashire collier who was found by the late Lord Derby trespassing on his land. "What are you doing on my land?" said his lordship, "you must not trespass here." "Then on whose land may I trespass?" asked the collier. "I have no land of my own; all the land belongs to somebody, and where then am I to trespass?" The moral of the story was, that all the land of the country being in individual hands locked up the natural opportunities all men ought to have of earning their living. The unemployed were out of work through no fault of their own. It might be that an ingenious man had invented a machine which would do the work of ten, twenty, or forty men; or that a foreign country had put on a tariff that would throw out of work large numbers of men in this country. Or it might be that there was a change in fashion, and men, women, and children were thereby rendered hungry and homeless. Through no fault of their own those people were prevented from earning wages, and they were denied the opportunities of procuring their living otherwise. Many of his constituents, honest and industrious men, competent and most willing to work, were at that moment out of employment, living in houses which they had denuded of their furniture to procure themselves food, and looking forward hopelessly to the future. What was to be done to remedy the sad state of things? Well, the question of the unemployed was not far separated from the land question. They heard frequent complaints in the House, from men competent to speak on the subject, that land was to a large extent going out of cultivation, and that large tracts were now lying idle. It was also true, as the Debate showed, that there was any amount of labour in the country waiting for employment. There was, therefore, plenty of both land and labour available. Now, land and labour were the only two essentials for the production of food and wealth. Some people might say that capital was also essential, and if that were so, he would answer that there was abundance of capital in the country awaiting investment. But he contended that land and labour were the only two essential things to supply food. These two things were divorced, and the problem was to get them re-united. There were many voluntary experiments in the creation of small cultivators being made by landlords, which he hoped would be generally followed by the land-owners. By means of the Clauses of the beneficent Act which the Government passed last year—the Parish Councils Act—the local bodies could also do a great deal towards creating small occupiers. Again, there was the colony founded by General Booth, which had the most satisfactory results, though one would have thought that the men employed in the colony were of the most unpromising nature to put on agricultural land. There was also a little colony of the same kind in Westmorland, in which he was personally interested. It was worked entirely, and with great success, by men and women who, until they were taken into the colony, lived in a condition of the most absolute hopelessness. He trusted that more of these experiments would be tried, for through them they would procure some alleviation, not perhaps of the hunger felt by the unemployed, but of those conditions of society which produced the unemployed. It might be absurd to talk of putting the unemployed back on the land. But, surely, they could prevent them leaving the country districts, and settling down in our great towns. Surely, it was a disgraceful state of things that our rural population should be drifting from the country into the towns and cities; and that failure and distress should fall upon many of those once prosperous village communities. The same land that was there when those places were flourishing was still there. That land would produce the same amount of food if cultivated; and he asked, was it not worth considering whether they could not get back again from the towns and cities to the country villages—that one essential to the prosperity of the agricultural districts; that one essential of human beings to produce from the lands abundance for themselves and their families? It was said that the Government could not find work for the unemployed. But what he wanted the Government to do was to enable those men to find work for themselves by adopting the policy he advocated. At any rate, he thought they must all admit that it was a disgrace to this great and rich country, of which he was as proud as any hon. Member in the House, that there should be hundreds of thousands of men and women who had no home which they could call their own, who did not know where to get their next meal, and who were imperfectly clad. But that sad state of things was not only a disgrace to us, it was a peril to us—a menace to the State and to the security of property, of which hon. gentlemen opposite spoke so often, to allow to exist so large a class who had no stake in the country, and no reason to be attached to the country of their birth.

MR. A. E. FELLOWES (Hunts, Ramsey,) said he desired to bring the House back again to the question of agricultural depression. He did not think the House really realised the magnitude of the depression which existed in the agricultural districts, and especially in the Eastern Counties. He regretted that the Government had not thought it necessary to hold out any hope that help would be extended to distressed agriculturists. Surely, the Government must know that the crisis through which Agriculture was at present passing was most serious. Indeed, the Prime Minister had acknowledged in another place that there was scarcely any subject so imminent, so pressing, and so grave, as the state of Agriculture in this country. It was, therefore, a matter for regret that the Government had not thought it well to do something on behalf of that great and suffering industry. They said they were waiting for the Report of the Royal Commission. Well, he was one of those who had never had any great opinion of the benefits of a Royal Commission on Agriculture. Agriculturists knew very well what were the causes of the suffering in agricultural districts, and the Royal Commission was nothing but an attempt to shelve the whole question. He was more firmly of that opinion after hearing the speech of the hon. Member for East Northamptonshire; but in commenting on that speech he wished to recognise fully the great good which the hon. Member had done in the last 12 months as Chairman of the Central Chamber of Agriculture. The hon. Member said that after what had happened on the Commission, the Report might be delayed till next Session, and probably till the Session after. If that were the case, and if the Government were going to wait for the Report of the Commission, where there were now scores of owners and hundreds of tenant farmers passing through the Bankruptcy Court, there would then be hundreds of the former and thousands of the latter. In many counties the depression spelt absolute ruin. In Norfolk the fall in the corn crop from the year 1874 to the year 1894 had meant a loss of £3,000,000, while the loss of stock in those years had been £384,000. The owners had in that period lost about £25 an acre, or £30,000,000 in all; the farmers had lost about £5 or £6 an acre, or £6,500,000 in all; and the small tradesmen in the villages and towns had difficulty in getting along at all. The yeoman farmer was almost extinct; and the labourers, who, he was glad to hear, had not felt the depression yet, would, if the present condition continued, be thrown out of employment in hundreds. The hon. Member for East Northamptonshire had said that one of the causes of the present state of things was that the initiatory stages had not been met promptly enough with reductions in rent. But this was not a question of rental alone. Taking three typical farms in Hampshire, one that was rented at £900 in 1879, was now rented at £430; another had fallen from £900 to £530; and a third from £1,500 to £250. In Norfolk, in the years 1874 to 1894, the rent of best lands had fallen from 25 to 35 per cent.; of medium land from 40 to 60 per cent.; while light and poorer land was not rented at all, and many farms had been abandoned. Knowing that all profit had gone out of the land, and that the rates and taxes on it had increased largely, agriculturists had a right to demand a thorough readjustment of local taxation. A Report had recently been brought out by Mr. Sturge, of the Surveyors' Institute, who gave as the burden on agricultural land:—Land tax, 9d. in the £; tithe, 3s. 6d. in the £; parochial rates, 2s. 10½d. in the £; death duties, 1s. 9d. in the £; property tax, 8d. in the £—total, 9s. 6½d. Out of that personal property only paid the death duties and property tax, 2s. 5d. in the £, leaving an excess on land of 7s. 1½d. The question of the readjustment of local taxation was one which Parliament might be asked to take up soon. As an agricultural Member, he did not in any way desire to bolster up any industry, but he asked that something should be done at once to enable agriculturists to tide over the present hard times. The Royal Commission was not likely to report for many months, and in the meantime some things might be done which would be of immediate benefit. After the Budget of last year, which placed fresh burdens on the land, the Land Tax ought to be handed over to the County Councils to be applied to the maintenance of highways or to the reduction of rates. Legislation respecting pure beer ought to be passed, and the question of preferential railway rates ought to be dealt with. These only touched the fringe of the question, but they would give immediate relief. This question of the condition of agriculture ought now to pass completely out of the range of Party politics. It was a National question, and ought to be treated as such. This country had not only the best farmers in the world, but the best stock in the world, and there was no industry to be compared in importance with the agricultural—none which employed so many hands, none which affected so much the prosperity of other industries. He trusted, therefore, that the Government would now see their way either to bring forward some measure which would be of benefit to the agricultural districts, or else that they would help on private Members' Bills.

Mr. T. C. T. WARNER (Somerset, N.) said, that one of the things which had led him to get up was that from the speeches of hon. Members on the Opposition Benches it was evident that they thought themselves to be the only representatives of Agriculture, and the only people in the House who knew anything about it, and could tell the difference between a cheese and a turnip. It was necessary that the agricultural Members on the Government side of the House should show that they also had a keen interest in agricultural affairs. Their sympathy was for the agricultural interest in general, but there was this difference from that of hon. Gentlemen opposite. He and his friends sympathised first and foremost with the agricultural labourer; secondly, with the farmer; and, lastly, and in a minor degree, with the landlord. No doubt there were a few landlords in the House, and he might say that he himself belonged to the landowning class, but his constituency contained only a few landowners; and his feeling was that those who had sent him there were entitled to the first claim on his services and his sympathy. Some reference had been made to the Budget and to the new Death Duties placed on agricultural land. He could speak from experience on this point, for he had recently paid duties on some property which had been bequeathed to him. The amount of land in rental was only £280 a year, but the whole property whence this portion came amounted to £200,000. The Death Duties were therefore aggregated, and the land had to pay 6½ per cent. He maintained, however, that the Budget had relieved the agricultural industry. It had certainly relieved the farmers and the men who received small incomes. He admitted that it had not relieved the landowners, but probably there was not that full amount of keen sympathy for the landowners on this point that some persons professed to feel. The other branch of the complaint made by hon. Members opposite was that the Government had produced no remedies for the agricultural depression. But he might fitly enough retort that other Governments, particularly those with which hon. Gentlemen opposite had been allied, had not seen fit in past years, when they had the opportunity, to bring forward remedies for agricultural distress.

COLONEL **KENYON-SLANEY**: Grants in aid.

MR. **WARNER** replied that only one-fifth of the grants in aid went to the relief of agricultural land; the other four-fifths passed to other kinds of rated property. But the result of giving this money was to show that it went, to a great extent, to the property which was least heavily taxed in the country. Take land in London as an example. It was not agricultural land, but indirectly it paid an enormous amount of rates. He believed that the rent of land in London had been estimated at £30,000,000 a year; and the question came to be whether it was desired to advocate the granting of millions in order to relieve taxes in this case. An hon. Member had suggested that rates were heavy on agricultural land. He did not think they were; and he would quote an instance in support of his view. He owned some agricultural land and also some houses in the suburbs of London; the rates in this case were 7s. 2d.; in the agricultural district the rates on land were 2s. 2¼d., and on the houses 2s. 4½d. He thought that a comparison of rates in these instances of land and houses would show that land was considerably better off, either as to rates or rent, than houses in the suburbs of London. It had been further suggested that agricultural land should not pay rates at all; that houses only should pay them. But what would be the effect of that remedy on purely agricultural districts? The effect would be to throw the rates on farm houses and cottages, and probably a small shop or two. By this means hon. Members would be helping to intensify an evil, for they would discourage the building of cottages; they would encourage the pulling down of cottages, and help a great deal to drive persons from the rural districts into the towns. He indicated that perhaps something might be done for agriculture by looking into the question of tithe, railway rates, and in providing an Amendment of the Agricultural Holdings Acts.

SIR M. J. **STEWART** (Kirkcudbright) said, he did not propose to follow the hysterical speech of the hon. Member, because the hon. Gentleman had not apparently understood the position taken up by the Opposition. But when the hon. Member said that the late Government had done nothing during their term of office for Agriculture, he would remind the hon. Member that the Board of Agriculture was instituted by the late Government, that the Contagious Diseases Acts were amended and strengthened, and that several millions of money in grants in aid were given to alleviate the condition of the rural taxpayers. The hon. Member had also failed to remember that free education for the labouring classes had been granted by the late Government, whence had sprung many useful agricultural lectures. Had the present Government done anything to benefit the working men of the country with the exception of shorter hours of labour for railway servants? Let the hon. Member who had just spoken take any fairly well managed property in the country, where the proprietor lived, and he would find that there were scores of men employed, not for the work they do, but from a great feeling of reluctance to dismiss them, although their labour was wholly unremunerative. Some hon. Members had never employed Agricultural Labour in their lives, although they talked much about the Agricultural Labourer. He knew perfectly well from his own experience in a number of Parliamentary contests, that gentlemen who did not own an acre of land, and who came from heaven knows where, made so many promises that when they came back to ask for re-election they were not returned again. Look at the late Attorney-General. One of his promises was that the Labourers were to have a holiday every week. Did Sir John Rigby ever propound that when he was a member of the Government? Not a bit of it. When he was comfortably ensconced on the Treasury Bench he forgot all about it. What was the result? When Forfarshire was consulted it returned a representative of another colour—one who voted on the Unionist side. The hon. Member, like others, seemed to suggest that the land paid nothing. [Mr. WARNER: Some of it.] Did the hon. Member not mean to suggest that Agricultural Land paid nothing? Of course that was his suggestion, and then he twitted them with pulling down the cottages.

MR. WARNER, interposing, said that his contention was that the effect of taking taxes off Agricultural Land would be that cottages would be pulled down because of the extra amount that would be put upon cottages.

SIR M. J. STEWART apologized if he misrepresented the hon. Member. As to the Labour question, he did not imagine that the proposal of the Government would achieve any good. He thoroughly sympathized with the unemployed. Most of them had many at home in whom they were interested, but they knew what sufferings there must be generally, particularly in this prolonged storm. They would, therefore, welcome any kind of scheme—sound scheme—which might be found useful. Would a Royal Commission do it? He confessed he had very little faith in the Government proposals. The President of the Local Government Board told them he was most anxious that the Royal Commission should report before this session, and he explained why. He should not go into that; but the right hon. Gentleman gave himself away, because he told them soon afterwards—at least it was generally known in the House—that the Royal Commission had not taken any evidence in regard to local taxation upon land.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: I said we had received a great deal of evidence on the subject, and that all we wanted was some official evidence which would not be taken in one day.

SIR M. J. STEWART was sorry if he misrepresented the right hon. Gentleman, but the Commission would hardly have been in a position to report on this important subject. If he had been a member of the Commission he should have objected to its reporting, seeing that Scotland had not been heard. He did not think that Scotland had a fair representative share of witnesses, and therefore he would have objected strongly to the termination of the enquiry. He thought the Budget Act of last Session dealt a very great blow at real property and also that it would strike heavily at smaller properties. It had a popular ring about it, but he believed that it would bring about the downfall of the present Government. There could be no doubt that the existing agricultural depression arose from the lowness of prices, and the Government ought to take some means to ascertain whether it was not possible to prevent a further fall. He wished to direct the attention of the President of the Local Government Board, to the necessity of closer supervision over foreign food imported, and he alluded especially to the large quantities of condensed milk received into the country. It was stated that the milk could not be heated under 140 degrees. It was condensed under vacuum, and he questioned whether it could be heated above 90. That would not kill animal life, or bacilli, and therefore through this milk the people were exposed to contagion from abroad. Some means surely ought to be taken by the Government to protect the public from this danger. As to the quality of this condensed milk, he had the authority of leading medical men for saying that there was so little nutrition in it that it was altogether insufficient to support infant life. If the public could not obtain a proper guarantee of the purity of this article, it should not be allowed to enter the country. The trade in it was rapidly growing, as might be seen from a return, showing in the last week of February 1894, about 8,130 cwt. was imported, as compared with 12,397 cwt. in the week just past. Also with regard to the importation of foreign meat, he thought there should be closer supervision, so that the British public might see that they obtained the article for which they paid; and that a system of licences should be devised for their protection. With regard to light railways he thought they would prove very useful, and hoped the Government would make the terms as easy as possible, and not force the localities to raise large sums from the rates. In case that were done the Government would get no thanks for the measure; but if, on the other hand, the Government saw their way to make the railways by guaranteeing a certain portion of the funds necessary, the lines would be welcomed. He trusted that the matters to which he had referred, being of great national importance, would receive the serious consideration of the Government.

*MR. R. L. EVERETT (Suffolk, Woodbridge) desired as an agricultural Member, to congratulate the hon. Member for the Basingstoke Division, on having by means of his Amendment raised a very interesting discussion, and he should have been glad if it were possible to continue the discussion to another day. He could imagine no more important subject for consideration than that of the depression which had long affected so many of the industries of the country. He had been much impressed, in his short experience in the House, by the great number of hours and days spent in the House in discussing dilatory motions, and by the great difficulty that was often found in obtaining a few hours to discuss a bread-and-cheese question like that of industrial depression. He was much struck by the remark of the Leader of the Opposition when he described the agricultural position as a national tragedy. These words were strong, but they did not at all exaggerate the depression in the Eastern Counties of England. Agriculture at the present time was in course of a revolution— a revolution which had already overturned the fortunes of a great number of people, and had caused an amount of suffering and distress which was simply incalculable. This was not a Party question, for the depression affected all Parties in the country. In the circumstances in which they found themselves, however, their voting would necessarily have a Party character. Hon. Members on his side of the House had been sent to Parliament to keep the Liberal Government in power, and they would not discharge faithfully their duty to their constituents if they disregarded that fact. At the same time they were quite within their rights in expressing their opinion frankly upon the present great depression, agricultural and industrial. He agreed to some extent with hon. Gentlemen opposite, in thinking that the Government did not fully realise the gravity of that depression. Nevertheless his friends and himself would do their best by their votes to keep the Government in power. The cause of the depression was perfectly well-known. It was the great and continuous fall in prices which affected more or less all the products of industry. That which was produced earned a smaller money reward than formerly. The return for the joint product of the money of the capitalist, the ability of the manager and the work of the artisan, became less year by year. As a result industry was discouraged, and a great number of persons were unemployed. Not long ago he had seen on the Tyne a number of derelict vessels, and he was told that less money was lost when they were laid up than when they were employed. In the same way there were many derelict farms, derelict factories, and even derelict money in the banks to an unprecedented amount, and now derelict men. Two features had marked the depression: one was its long continuance—it had been going on for 15 years—and the other its general prevalence throughout the world. It was felt in the United States, in the Colonies, and on the Continent of Europe, as well as at home. In an article in the December number of the *Royal Agricultural Society's Journal* it was shown that the depression in Agriculture was greater, if anything, in other countries than here, notwithstanding the fact that in France, Germany, Italy, and elsewhere, recourse had been had to Corn Laws. Legislation of that kind had not availed to save the farmers abroad. The Corn Laws passed in this country in 1815 were intended to prevent a fall in prices which was expected; but, in spite of them, prices went down and remained lower than they had been during the previous 15 years. Thus our own experience and that of other nations now showed that Corn Laws did not prevent agricultural depression. The present depression was world-wide, but still there were countries which had escaped it, and the circumstances of those countries might supply a solution of the problem. They had heard that in India agriculture was not suffering exceptionally; in Mexico, according to Consular Reports, agriculture was making healthy progress, and in the Argentine Republic it was increasing by leaps and bounds. There was one circumstance by which these three countries were differentiated from this country, and that was, that they had not the gold standard. He respectfully submitted to the House that our standard was the real cause of our depression. We were cursed with a standard that was steadily appreciating. That was the curse of agriculture and other industries in Great Britain and every other country which had a gold standard. That was the real root and cause of the continual fall in prices. He would earnestly and respectfully submit to the House that this appreciation of our standard had not been brought about by any natural cause. It was entirely an artificial work, the work of man and the work of legislation. It was not due to a difference in gold, but to a difference in the work that gold had to do. Whereas in 1873 the only countries that had a gold standard were England and her Colonies and Portugal, containing a population of about 47,000,000 people, to-day no less than 320,000,000 of people had come under the gold standard, and the great extra demand for gold thus created had had the natural effect of increasing its value. The general level of prices was the balance between the commodities in the market and the standard by which those commodities were measured, and during the last 20 years gold had had a sevenfold work to do. Such a state of things could have no other effect than to produce an enormous fall in the price of commodities, and he would respectfully remind the House that this had been brought about by a policy of restriction. Baron Rothschild, speaking in Paris in 1870 at the Conseil Supérieur, said:—

> "The simultaneous employment of the two precious metals is satisfactory, and gives rise to no complaint. Whether gold or silver dominates for the time being it is always true that the two metals concur together in forming the monetary circulation of the world; *it is the general mass of the two metals combined which serves as the measure of the value of things.* The suppression of silver would amount to *a veritable destruction of values without any compensation!*"

That was exactly what had been proceeding since. The effect had been exactly as Lord Rothschild had predicted. This cause had not ceased to work. It was still going on, and we wanted a quick remedy. He could not help thinking in his own mind that what was wanted first, was, to stop this unfortunate legislation, and he would respectfully submit to the House that all the measures mentioned in this discussion would be as useless to check the depression if the fall in prices went on, as were the efforts of Mrs. Partington with her mop to drive back the waves of the Atlantic. Having paid attention to agricultural history, he affirmed, without fear of being contradicted, that the key to agricultural depression or prosperity was to be found in prices, and the key to prices was to be found in monetary conditions. From the time of Elizabeth the value of a quarter of wheat gradually rose from 7s. or 8s. to five times as much, and historians and political economists were agreed that the marvellous lift in prices was due entirely to changes in the supply of the precious metals. As they increased in abundance prices expanded. During the twenty years of our war with France at the end of last century paper money was our standard, and prices went up again very much. After 1819, when we changed our standard back to the precious metals, down went prices to a lower level. After the abolition of the Corn Laws there came the gold discoveries, and they sustained prices at as high a level as they had been under Protection. The general conclusion was that agricultural prices were ruled by monetary conditions. Twenty years ago we made a change in the direction of restricting the supply of standard money by making one metal do the work of two, and, conformably with all experience, the contraction caused our present difficulties. All were agreed that the remedy was to be found in a rise in prices; and that could be produced in one of two ways. We could try to restrict the importation of corn by putting on heavy duties, but he for one was dead against that, and he did not believe it would be done in the case of wheat or barley. The other way, which appeared to him to be the truly Liberal way, was to remove restrictions on coinage—to restore to the precious metals the same freedom of coinage, tender, and use, which they enjoyed before the fall in prices began. People had no objection to shillings or half-crowns; they were willing to take any number of them that were put into circulation. The restriction on the output of money at the Mint was not in their interest. The President of the Local Government Board appeared to think that low prices and general industrial depression were a good thing for our workmen; but that line of reasoning was opposed to common-sense. If the right hon. Gentleman thought that low prices were most to be desired, he might urge the Government to do for England what they had done for India by closing the Mint. The effect of that would be to complete the ruin of English agriculturists by driving prices further down. If low prices were a good thing, let the Government, who had closed the Mint for silver, now close it for gold, and they would see prices go low enough. He hoped the debate would go on for another day, in order that full expression might be given by Members of their views as to the real cause of the depression from which we are suffering. He did not wish to speak altogether against his own side, because he believed the Government had real sympathy with agriculture. They had mentioned it in the Queen's Speech, both at the beginning of this Session and last; and they had appointed a Commission to enquire into the causes of agricultural depression. Hon. Members who had a little spare time would do well to read the evidence given before it by Dr. Giffen, Professor Foxwell, and, if he might say so, by himself, for information upon the relation of money matters to the fall in prices. By the financial legislation of last year the Government had relieved the pressure upon farmers, and they had given the agricultural classes the Parish Councils Act—[*Opposition laughter*]—which was the charter of their liberties—[*Renewed laughter*]. If hon. Members who laughed attempted to diminish the easier access to the land and the control over charities given by that Act, and the control over the Poor Law, they would soon find out their mistake at the polls. The Government had shown sympathy with the depressed condition of Agriculture, but more could be done for Agriculture than in any other way if the Government would let them have the same freedom at the Mints, for silver as well as gold, as prevailed at the ports with regard to the importation of commodities.

*SIR W. H. HOULDSWORTH (Manchester, N.W.) pointed out that other industries were suffering scarcely less than Agriculture, except, perhaps, the machine-making industry, which had the great advantage of being able to send its productions to India and other parts of the world, duty free. The peculiarity of the present depression was that it was not transient or temporary, as it was thought to be 10 years ago, but continuous. It was formerly the doctrine that periods of depression were succeeded by periods of prosperity, but the present depression had existed for the last 20 years. In 1885, it was thought phenomenal that prices should have fallen 24 per cent. Now the fall had been no less than 40 per cent. since the period before 1873. The depreciation of industrial property—in fact, of all kinds of property—had been enormous. He admitted that the volume of trade had been maintained, and that some of our export returns showed an increase, but the House should remember that we had an increasing population. The question was—Were we making a profit out of our trade not only for the capitalists, but the wage-earner, or living to a great extent out of capital and destroying the store which was to provide for future generations? In Lancashire scarcely a new manufactory of any account had been erected in the last two or three years; and, although the number of spindles and looms might remain the same, it was well known that some third were becoming totally ineffective, and would shortly be swept away, not being able to compete with new ones. But he desired to take a larger view of this subject. If the future investment of capital in works of enterprise in this country were to fall off, what was to become of the country. In the *Economist* he had found a table showing the amount of capital invested in this country for every year from 1889 to 1893. That table showed that the amount of capital invested in 1889 was £207,000,000, in 1890 it was £142,000,000, in 1891 it was £104,000,000, in 1892 it was £84,000,000, and in 1893 it had fallen to £49,000,000. Therefore, in 1893, the public were only investing one-fourth of what they had invested in 1889. It must, moreover, be remarked that of this £49,000,000, some £36,000,000 was invested not in industrial enterprises in this country, but in loans to Foreign and Colonial Governments, while of the remainder, which was only £13,000,000, he found £1,000,000 was invested in such undertakings as music halls and hotels. Those figures showed that our investment of capital was diminishing, and that, therefore, we were not laying down a solid foundation for the Labour of this country in the future. Sooner or later, a catastrophe would take place if this sort of thing continued. The cause of the distressed condition of the country undoubtedly was to be found in the abnormal and phenomenal fall, amounting to some 40 per cent., in prices that had occurred within the last few years. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board, and the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had each their own explanation of the fall of prices. They maintained that the cause of it was the large increase in the production of commodities. He, however, thought that this was a fallacy. It was quite possible for prices to rise when the quantity of commodities was increasing. Take cotton from 1849 to 1872. Though there had been an increase in the production of cotton from 3,000,000 bales in 1849 to 7,000,000 bales in 1872, the price of cotton rose in that period some 50 per cent. The increase from 1872 to 1894 had only been from 7,000,000 bales to 10,000,000 bales, yet the price had fallen more than 50 per cent. The same thing might be said of wheat. He believed these two periods were as fair as could be taken, to compare the relative movement of prices and of quantities, and he knew of no explanation of the difference except one—namely, that in the former period they had, accompanying the large increase of production of cotton, wheat, and other articles, an increased supply of gold, which raised prices; whereas during the latter period not only had there been a diminished amount of gold, but they had thrown one of the precious metals, silver, out of use as money. That was the reason of the difference in the one period as compared with the other. The Chancellor of the Exchequer did not think the industries of the country could be in a very bad condition, because the Income Tax returns had not only kept up, but had increased. He doubted very much whether the Income Tax returns were a true index of the industrial prosperity of the country; Schedule D included an immense number of profits, beside the profits on industrial undertakings, such as profits on investments in Foreign Railways, &c., profits of middlemen, and the profits of the various professions. The right hon. Member for St. George's some two or three years ago, when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer, stated that the aggregate profit made by the medical profession exceeded the total profits realised by the whole cotton industry, that the profits of the legal profession exceeded the total profits from the coal industry, and that the profits of the whole of the productive industries only amounted to one-half of the profits derived from distribution and transport. It was not these latter classes, but the producers, we had to look to, both for the prosperity of the present time, and for the capital of the future. The position of the cotton industry at the present time was most lamentable. The secretary of the great United Trades Union, which included all the branches of the cotton trade, informed him that there was at present "a higher percentage of unemployed than was ever known at any time since the Cotton Famine." This statement was confirmed by private information. He had seen a representative of the masters, who also said that no one could go through the great districts of Lancashire without seeing looms and spindles stopped on every side, and that at present there was no prospect of any improvement. He was afraid they were much disposed to lay it at the door of the Secretary of State for India, and he was himself of opinion that the putting on of Import Duties in India would have an injurious effect. But in his view the disease was far more deeply seated, and that if the fall of prices continued, it could only end in the stoppage of works of all kinds, for it was impossible to carry on these concerns at a profit, or even to make both ends meet, if these successive falls in prices continued. The losses were compensated, no doubt, to some extent, by the fall in the price of raw materials; but, as long as they had wages at the present level, it would be found impossible to make both ends meet under these adverse conditions. There had been many rumours of failures, and he believed that unless some miracle were to take place within the next few months, they would find in all our industrial centres very great distress amongst the wage-earners who, up to this time had done fairly well, and whose wages the manufacturers had no desire to reduce if they could help it. The Government should consider this question in a serious spirit, and not wait till they had reached a state of things which it would be very difficult to repair. When they were told that pauperism had decreased, they must remember that the Trades Unions relieved those out of work to a much greater extent than they did formerly. From the Board of Trade returns, it appeared that in 1890 the percentage of unemployed was 1·70, while in 1893 it was 10·2. It was the duty of hon. Members to impress the Government with a sense of the present depression, for he believed, from remarks that had fallen from the Treasury Bench from time to time that its occupants relied too much on bare statistics without considering other circumstances which explained those statistics. The Government should send down a Commission and ascertain on the spot the true state of affairs. They would then be more ready to consider a remedy. Unless something were done soon, the industries of this country would be ruined beyond repair.

SIR F. H. EVANS (Southampton) said, that it seemed to him as if some hon. Members thought that in bi-metallism lay some sort of hope for a change in the agricultural depression of the country. He thought it very unfortunate that hon. Members should hold such a view as to the efficacy of bi-metallism. It was clear to him, from their arguments, that they did not know what was taking place in the various countries of the world. Take America, for example. If ever, in the history of this century, there had been what was known in America as a log-rolling movement, it had been in connection with this silver business. What had the owners of the silver mines done in America.? They had, by controlling the Legislature, induced the people of that country to buy the produce of their mines at a price far exceeding the mercantile value of the production. Look at the position of the American Treasury at the present moment. At the close of the civil war in 1864, they issued bonds bearing interest at 6 per cent. Their credit grew and they issued bonds at 5 per cent., then at 4 per cent., then at 3, and later still at 2½ per cent. But what was bi-metallism doing for them to-day? The fact was, that the Americans were appealing to the bankers of the world to save them from a financial crash, because gold had gone out of the country and they could get nothing but silver in order to meet their financial engagements. They were a large borrowing country, and they had to find gold with which to meet the interest on their debts, and they could only do this by paying a large premium upon gold which they would have to obtain from other countries. In Mexico, which was a great silver-producing country, there was prosperity far and wide—why? Because they owed nothing in gold. The mine-owner paid his men out of the silver which was produced from his mine. He had no gold to find for this purpose, and the consequence was that it accumulated in the country. Take the Argentine Republic. There the position was this: the gold premium was about 250, but the wages of the labourer had not grown at the same rate as the premium on gold, and he paid to-day something like 30 per cent. more than the original price of silver, as against a premium of 250 in respect of gold. Take South Africa, which was not a silver-producing country, and what was the position there? It was a practically satisfactory position. All the banks were earning money, no one was complaining, and no one desired the adoption of bi-metallism. In fact, if they were to adopt such a system they would simply have to pay for the production of their mines at a higher rate. Some hon. Members asked that bi-metallism should be adopted in this country. Did they know how much England had lent to other countries, the loans to be payable in gold? He believed it was something like £600,000,000 sterling. How was that to be paid back to them? If they made silver the medium of payment, they would have their banks filled with silver, and gold would go out of the country. [“Where to?”] Naturally people elsewhere would want to get gold, if they in this country were to make it very cheap. He was convinced it was a great error to think that the cure for agricultural distress lay in a metallic currency. Some hon. Members wanted eighteenpence or two shillings, to be worth half-a-crown, but no jerrymandering of that kind was going to cure agricultural distress. Let them abandon this attempt to raise the fictitious value of silver, and turn to something which was more calculated to benefit the country. He objected to what the Government did in India in this matter; their action, he believed, being partly attributable to the clamour made in regard to silver. England was the great money-lender to other nations, and if hon. Members really desired to benefit their country, let them drop this silver agitation. They would then find that silver would reach its proper level in the exchanges of the world, they would hear no more about that metal, and would keep gold in their own country and ensure its maintaining, also, its proper value.

Admiral E. FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne) said, it was a new revelation to him and to many other hon. Members that the fall of prices was due to the want of the bi-metallic system. What it was really due to, he contended, was the gambling, in produce of all kinds, which went on, on the exchanges of Liverpool, London, and elsewhere, and which had now grown to such proportions that it had assumed the position of a gigantic evil which called for prompt legislative remedy. This gambling in produce, he honestly believed, was the main factor in the fall of prices. He had talked to Members of the House who were men of great financial experience, and they had said that there was nothing in the contention; but that was not an answer. Mr. Smith, of Whitney Court, Hereford, who was an expert in regard to this subject, had said that on the produce exchanges of London, Liverpool, and elsewhere in this country, the same cursed system of gambling prevailed as in Berlin, Paris, New York, and Chicago. He had no sympathy with gambling of any kind, but there was no form of gambling which did so much harm as this. The principal articles which were generally dealt in for gambling purposes were wheat, maize, sugar, silver, and cotton; and those were the chief articles whose values had been brought down to the lowest point ever known in the history of the century. England was at last realising that there was a great deal in this contention, while in the Parliaments of other countries measures were being introduced to put an end to the practice. In America a Bill dealing with the subject had passed the Lower House by an enormous majority, and, although it had yet to pass the Senate, the principle of the measure had been acknowledged. In Germany the Emperor, in his speech to the Reichstag, stated that measures would be proposed dealing with the question of speculation in produce; in Belgium a Bill had already been tabled and introduced into Parliament; Russia had dealt with the question, as had also France, Hungary, and the Croatian States. The King of Sweden had also denounced the system, and had stated that the Government of that country would introduce Bills to put an end to it by legislation; and now Denmark was dealing with the question. It would not do for us with our superior air to say this gambling had nothing to do with the question of fall in prices. Some years ago there was on the Stock Exchange what was called bearing down bank shares. That naturally caused a run on the banks, and one or two banks had to close their doors. The great banking interest in the House went to the Government of the day and said: “There is a tremendous peril in face of us and you must deal with it.” Mr. Leatham, the then Member for York, brought in a Bank Bill, which was passed through both Houses in a very short time. The pernicious system was stopped. The law now was, that if any one wished to sell bank shares he must give the number of the shares he proposed to sell. Those who agreed with Mr. Smith asked that the Government on the Royal Commission would not quietly put aside Mr. Smith's arguments. Let him quote another authority that could not be despised, namely, the Secretary of the Board of Trade. Sir Courtenay Boyle had said:—

> "Commercial gambling has been condemned by the common consent of all who have any knowledge whatever of the subject."

Was the Royal Commission without knowledge? Sir Courtenay Boyle added that this gambling had been condemned by every writer on Political Economy, and it needed no representation from anybody to convince one that it was an unmitigated evil. Mr. Smith delivered an address before the Central Chamber of Agriculture, and that body passed a resolution requesting the Government to give the matter their immediate consideration. The National Agricultural Union——[*A laugh.*] Hon. Members might laugh, but the Union had some very influential members, including a former highly respected Member of the House of Commons. Mr. Smith delivered an address before the Union, Lord Winchilsea being in the chair, and a resolution, condemnatory of "the future option and settlement system which tends to displace the natural law of supply and demand," was unanimously passed. They called for legislation which would render all sales illegal except those for actual delivery. That was the remedy which Mr. Smith proposed. All that was wanted was the passing of a Bill of a single clause, which would compel a seller to deliver what he sold. That would put a stop to the whole business of gambling in 48 hours. Often there was no intention on the part of a speculator in corn to deliver a bushel, just as there was no intention on the part of the buyer to require the delivery of a bushel. Twelve million bushels of corn were sold in one day in New York. That stock of corn did not exist within 1,000 miles of New York. Of course, it was necessary for great millers to buy in advance. That was a legitimate speculation. There was delivery at the end of the term fixed upon between the seller and buyer; but in the cases he had been speaking of, there was no intention to deliver and no intention to receive: it was pure gambling. One of the evil consequences of this system of gambling was, that the unfortunate farmers, when they went into the market with their produce, were as helpless as turtles captured by men-of-war's-men in a turtle hunt. The turtles were turned over on their backs by seamen who ran along the beach and then carried them off at leisure to the ships. The prices for produce realised in the local markets were the prices that were determined by the gambling transactions at Liverpool and London. This thing was of American growth. It was imported in 1883 from America, where all the bad things came from, including the present bad weather. [Mr. BURNS: "I came from America the other day."] Yes, the hon. Gentleman came from America the other day. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Seaford had shown that over-production was not the cause of the fall in prices, and yet there had been a reduction of 51 per cent. in the price of wheat all over the world. Indeed, it had been clearly established that, instead of there being an abnormal supply of wheat, the acreage under wheat in America had diminished rather than increased, and that the increase in population had more than kept pace with the supply of wheat. In October 1891–92, the foreign corn imported into this country amounted to 20,520,000 quarters. The price was then 35s. 11d. In 1894–95 there were only 19,405,000 quarters imported—that was a million quarters less, and yet the price fell to 17s. 7d. Therefore it was not any glut in the market that had brought about the fall in prices. What then was the cause of the fall? Mr. Smith had shown conclusively that it was not due to bi-metallism; that it was due simply and solely to the accursed system of gambling, which he asked the Government to put down by legislation. He did not want to fling stones at the Chairman of the Royal Commission; but it was to be regretted that the right hon. Gentleman was not present on the occasion that Mr. Smith was examined. The right hon. Gentleman refused to lay the statement of Mr. Smith before the House. Surely the right hon. Gentlehad no right to keep from the House information of such importance on this pressing question. The House had got, it was true, Mr. Smith's evidence, but Mr. Smith had told him that the evidence he gave before the Commission was not based on his statement, but was given in a hostile cross-examination conducted in the interest of the Stock Exchange rather than with a view to obtain the truth in regard to gambling. [*Laughter.*] It was all very well for hon. Gentlemen to smile and say: "Our friend the Admiral is playing the fool, or is the dupe of other men more foolish than himself;" but he really thought there was a good deal in this matter. At all events, if he were in error, he erred in good company. Mr. Smith was no child in this matter. He know more about it than any Member of the Government, having been for 30 years engaged on the Liverpool Produce Exchange; and for the last two years he had devoted his attention to the subject completely. When Mr. Plimsoll first protested against the conditions of the Mercantile Marine he was laughed at in the House of Commons; but his self-sacrifice brought about the reform. Mr. Smith was doing for Agriculture what Mr. Plimsoll had done for the Merchant Service, and he would not be laughed out of his purpose. He himself would not have intervened in this question had he not been impressed with Mr. Smith's burning zeal in a righteous cause. He appealed to the Chief Secretary and to the Secretary of State for India to put pressure on the Chairman of the Royal Commission to produce for the instruction of Members Mr. Smith's statement. It was their duty to produce it. Since he had mastered this question he had spoken about it in every part of the Division which he represented, and the farmers had been much moved by the information which he had derived from Mr. Smith. He heard Members laugh, but he was not to be moved by laughter. That was a sign that they did not understand the question and its burning importance. It was generally held that naval men knew nothing but about sheet-anchors and cables, and masts and yards; but he had felt it necessary to lift up his voice with respect to this crying evil. When all other Nations were dealing with the question by legislation, was England to remain the gambling-hell of the world? It was asserted that evil could not be stopped by law. Truly, murder was not prevented because there was the law to hang murderers; and robbery with violence was not made impossible because those convicted of it were flogged. But such punishment deterred others; and in this matter of which he was speaking he believed that legislation would do a great deal to bring men to a higher ideal as to what was right, by showing them that the evil was no longer winked at by Parliament. He would make a last appeal to the right hon. Gentleman on the Treasury Bench to supply the House with a printed statement of Mr. Smith that hon. Members might judge of the weight of his evidence.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned." *(Mr. Goschen.)*

Motion agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the House do now adjourn."

[House adjourned at seven minutes to Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Friday, 8th February 1895.

SCOTTISH SEA FISHERIES BILL [H.L.].

Bill for Better Regulation of Scottish Sea Fisheries—presented (the Earl of Camperdown) read 1ª. (No. 9).

House adjourned shortly after half past Four o'clock, p.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, 8th February 1895.

The House met at Three of the clock.

EAST INDIA (PERSONS BROUGHT TO TRIAL).

Mr. W. S. CAINE (Bradford, E.) moved for a Return of the number of persons (1) brought to trial in each Province of British India in each year from 1883 to 1892, inclusive, for offences for which capital sentences might be inflicted, specifying those originally tried by the High Court in each Presidency Town, and those originally tried by the Mofussil Sessions Courts; (2) the number of persons sentenced to death for each offence by the High Courts originally and by the Sessions Courts, also the number of instances in which the capital sentences of the Sessions Judges were upheld, reversed, or commuted by the High Courts as Appellate or Confirming Courts; (3) the number of persons who received other sentences than death, or were acquitted; and (4) the number of persons reprieved.

Motion agreed to.

CIVIL SERVICE SECOND DIVISION CLERKS.

Sir A. K. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) moved for a Copy of the Correspondence between the Treasury and certain Members of the House in relation to grievances of Clerks of the Second Division of the Civil Service.

Motion agreed to.

LIGHT RAILWAYS.

*Sir BERNHARD SAMUELSON (Oxfordshire, Banbury) moved for a Copy of the Report with Appendices, of a Committee, presented to the Right Honourable J. Bryce, M.P., Chairman of a Conference on Light Railways.

Motion agreed to.

QUEENSLAND (IMMIGRATION).

Mr. JOHN E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) moved for a Return relating to Immigration into Queensland, the mortality in the Colony, and the Return to their native Islands of Polynesian Islanders during the years 1886 to 1894, inclusive (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 342, of Session 1893.)

Motion agreed to.

VOLUNTEER RIFLE RANGES.

Colonel A. LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping) asked the Secretary of State for War whether he was aware that, since the range in Epping Forest was burnt on November 4, 1893, the 1st Herts Rifle Volunteers and two companies of the 3rd Middlesex had no range for ball practice nearer than Park, 20 minutes' journey by train, at a cost of one shilling return ticket per man; and if he could hold out any immediate prospect of their being provided with a range in the neighbourhood?

The SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, Stirling, &c.): Volunteer corps provide themselves with ranges, paying for them out of the capitation rates they receive for efficient Volunteers. When the range is more than five miles from the company's head-quarters a travelling allowance of 4s. per annum for each efficient Infantry Volunteer is made.

Colonel LOCKWOOD: Can the right hon. Gentleman give me any information as to the last part of the question?

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I presume that this body of Volunteers find it cheaper to use a more distant range than to provide themselves with one nearer home.

LOSS OF LIFE BY SHIPWRECK.

Mr. E. H. BAYLEY (Camberwell, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade, the number of lives lost

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

by shipwreck round the coast during the recent gales, say from 20th December to 17 January; the number lost by capsizing of lifeboats; the number saved by coastguard, and the number saved by lifeboats; specifying separately the number saved by means of tugs and without tugs; and, whether, as the Board of Trade lifeboat at Ramsgate has become useless, he will arrange for it to be replaced by a steam lifeboat of modern design?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. BRYCE, Aberdeen, S.): The total number of lives lost by shipwreck on or near the coast of the United Kingdom between December 20th and January 17th is, according to the reports received up to the present time, 400. The number saved amount to 686, of whom 184 were saved by the coastguard, rocket apparatus, and help from the shore, and 173 by lifeboats. I am not able to state separately the number saved by means of tugs and without tugs. Two lives were lost apparently by the capsizing of lifeboats, but this is, I understand, contested by the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. The lifeboat at Ramsgate is the property of the National Lifeboat Institution, and is now being repaired. It has, in the meantime, been replaced by another boat belonging to the Institution. As the harbour tug at Ramsgate is always available for towing the lifeboat I do not think the question of providing a steam lifeboat need be entertained.

FOREIGN PRISON-MADE GOODS.

MR. W. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware of the fact that the brushmakers in Great Britain and Ireland complain that their trade is injured and almost paralysed by the enormous importation of brushes made by convicts in German gaols; whether he is aware that these brushes are not allowed to be sold in Germany within a stated distance of the prison in which they are produced; and whether the Government will take any measures to prevent native artisans and manufacturers being ruined by the product of foreign criminals. I should also like to ask whether the right hon. Gentleman is aware of the fact that a petition has been presented from the *employés* of the North Dublin Brush Company, containing 150 signatures, praying for the prohibition of the importation of manufactured goods produced wholly or in part by convict labour in foreign countries?

MR. BRYCE: I was not aware of the fact that the petition had been presented. I am aware that some disquietude has existed among the brushmakers owing to an apprehension that their trade may suffer from the importation of German prison-made brushes, but a reference to the Blue Book recently published shows that the quantity of brushes made in German prisons is small, nor is there anything to show what portion of these brushes are imported to this country.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade what steps he proposes to take in view of the facts officially reported by Her Majesty's Ambassador at Berlin, on authentic information derived from the Imperial German Government, that over 44,000 German convicts and felons are compelled to work at nominal wages at sixteen British staple trades, and that the sale of their productions is prohibited in the local prison district; and, if he proposes to give effect to the unanimous vote of the Trades Union Congress against the importation of goods so made, supported by the resolutions of numerous public meetings and the Petitions to Parliament of various National industries?

MR. BRYCE: The facts reported by Her Majesty's Ambassador at Berlin do not appear to me to support the view of the hon. Member; but on the contrary to show that the quantity of goods produced in any particular trade is comparatively small, nor is there anything to show that any considerable proportion of the goods manufactured reaches this country. There does not therefore appear to be, so far as these Reports are concerned, any case for taking any steps.

MR. FIELD: May I ask whether, if I produce trustworthy evidence, the right hon. Gentleman will take any action in the matter?

MR. BRYCE: I do not think I can make any statement on the subject without seeing the evidence.

MR. CYRIL J. S. DODD (Essex, Maldon): Is it not the fact that these brushes are not allowed to be sold in Germany within a certain distance of the prison in which they are produced? and, if that is the law, how it became so?

MR. BRYCE: I am quite unable to say. I believe my hon. Friend will find it stated in a Blue-book that in Prussia these brushes are not allowed to be sold within ten kilometres, or about six miles of the prison. I do not know that such a regulation is made by other countries.

THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

SIR J. LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury why the publication of the indices to the separate volumes of the Parliamentary Debates of last Session is so much delayed; why the General Index is not yet issued; and, whether any precautions have been taken in the new contract with Messrs. Waterlow and Sons to prevent the inconvenience caused by the delay in the completion of the published Debates?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): I can only repeat to my hon. Friend the reply which I gave yesterday—namely, that I am assured by the late contractors that they are making every effort to issue the General Index on Saturday next. Provision has been made in the new contract for avoiding similar delay in the future, and the present contractor tells me that he sees no reason why the indices should not be brought out at an early date.

THE MOHILL BOARD OF GUARDIANS.

MR. J. TULLY (Leitrim, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether the attention of the Local Government Board for Ireland has been drawn to complaints of the disrespectful conduct of the Clerk of the Mohill Board of Guardians towards the Chairman during the meetings of the Guardians; whether he is aware that owing to the Clerk's years and infirmity the chief part of the business of the Union has been discharged by an assistant paid a small weekly salary by him; whether he is aware that the Clerk has addressed a letter to the Local Government Board, reflecting on the Chairman's resolution fixing the remuneration that would be allowed union officials for the distribution of seed potatoes; and whether the Local Government Board will order a sworn inquiry into the conduct of this officer?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): A difference of opinion has arisen between the Mohill Guardians and their Clerk as to the remuneration of the latter for his services in connection with the distribution of seed potatoes this year. I have seen a copy of the letter addressed to the Local Government Board by the Clerk, on the subject of the resolution of the Guardians, fixing the remuneration to be paid to him for this work, also a copy of the resolution in question. The Clerk, I am informed, has been in office over forty years, and probably, as in the case of most other unions, employs an assistant to aid him in the discharge of his duties. The Local Government Board are not aware, however, that the chief part of the Union business has been discharged by the Clerk's assistant, and there appears to be nothing in the papers to lead the Board to think that the Clerk has been guilty of misconduct, or that he is inefficient. A sworn inquiry does not therefore seem to be called for; but if a specific charge be made against the Clerk the Board will at once investigate it.

THE ABOR TRIBES IN ASSAM.

MR. H. J. WILSON (York, W.R., Holmfirth): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India, whether he has obtained the information asked for by him (the hon. Member for the Holmfirth Division) on the 12th June last, namely, whether the Treaties concluded with the Abor Tribes in Assam in 1862, 1863, and 1866 are still operative; whether the British Government is still under obligation to pay yearly to the Meyong Abors 80 bottles of rum and two seers of opium; to the Kebang Abors 40 bottles of rum and two seers of opium; to the Abors of Dehang Debang Doars 100 bottles of rum; to the Bor Abors 100 bottles of rum and two seers of opium; and whether these payments are still made; and, if not, when they ceased to be paid, and what has been substituted?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. H. H. Fowler, Wolverhampton, E.): I have made the inquiry asked for by the hon. Member, and learn that the payment of rum and opium, as well as of other dues in kind, stipulated for in the Treaties, was commuted in 1877 to money payments aggregating Rs. 3,312 annually.

PUERPERAL FEVER.

MR. J. C. MACDONA (Southwark, Rotherhithe): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that the coroner's jury on the death of a young woman, named Gray, in Kentish Town, returned a verdict of manslaughter on 6th February against Mrs. Rake, the nurse who attended her, and that it was stated in evidence that, receiving notice to cease attending cases in consequence of being infected with puerperal fever, she visited three women, in each of which the patient took the fever and died; and, what further steps will the Government take to protect women from such danger of infection?

THE SECRETARY OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Sir WALTER FOSTER): Puerperal fever was specified in the Infectious Diseases (Notification) Act, 1889, in order that the authority might be able to warn midwives and others who have been attending puerperal fever, against attending other midwifery cases. In the instance referred to it appears from the evidence that the nurse was warned first by the Medical Officer of Health and then by the Vestry Clerk. The warning was, however, disregarded, and the woman is now being prosecuted for a criminal offence. Such action by the authorities must, in itself, tend very effectually to prevent the recurrence of cases such as that alluded to.

MR. MACDONA: May I ask if the Government are prepared to bring in a Bill for the registration of duly qualified nurses to whom certificates to act as midwives might be given?

SIR B. W. FOSTER: I am not aware of any such intention.

SCOTCH BILLS.

SIR JOHN LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether it is the duty of any official in the Scottish Office to examine all Bills brought into Parliament, to ascertain whether they are applicable to Scotland, and when the terminology of the legal system of England, and the reference to English Courts and procedure indicates they are not, to see that the scope of their operation is clearly defined, so as to prevent litigation consequent on doubts whether they do not extend to Scotland; and, whether an arrangement can be made for the examination of Bills, so that clauses relating to Scotland may be expressed in Scottish legal phraseology when the terminology of the English and Scottish systems is different?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR, Clackmannan and Kinross): All public Bills brought into Parliament are examined in the Lord Advocate's Department with a view to ascertaining whether they are, or should be, made applicable to Scotland; and where it appears that they are intended to apply, or that they should be made to apply, to Scotland, Amendments are, when necessary, moved upon their reaching the Committee stage, to secure that the application shall be properly effected in phraseology appropriate to the Scottish Legal System. Government Bills, when intended to apply to Scotland, are adapted to Scottish Law before being introduced.

*SIR H. E. MAXWELL (Wigton): May I ask whether the attention of the right hon. Gentleman has been called to a Circular emanating from the Society of Procurators in Glasgow?

THE LORD ADVOCATE: Yes, I have seen it.

SIR H. E. MAXWELL: Are the statements in the Circular well founded?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE: I cannot say. I did not observe any reference to any Bill having passed through Parliament without being properly adapted to Scotland, if it was intended to apply to that country, during the time I was in office.

PRIVATE ROADS TO MINERS' DWELLINGS.

MR. J. CALDWELL (Mid Lanark): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether his attention has been called to the judgment of the Court of Session in a case at the instance of Merry and Cunninghame (Limited), whereby the court have interdicted 23 miners from trespassing upon roads leading to dwelling houses tenanted by miners working at the colliery, on the ground that the said road, although forming the access to the dwelling houses, is the private property in the personal occupation of the pursuers, the mineral lessees; and whether, inasmuch as the judgment appears to interdict the defenders from using the said roads as an access to the miners' dwellings for the purpose of visiting the tenants for any purpose, including the right of picketing, he will give the consent of the Crown to actions for breach of such interdict.

*THE LORD ADVOCATE: I have read the report of the judgment in this case, and I do not understand that the Interdict was granted solely on the ground that the road, although forming the access to the dwelling houses, is the private property in the personal occupation of the pursuers, the mineral lessees, but upon the further ground that there was no evidence that the persons interdicted were upon the road with the desire of the occupants of the houses, or that these occupants wished that they should be permitted to come there. In other words, I understand that the judgment proceeded on the ground that the persons complained of had no authority, express or implied, from any of the persons interested in the road to be upon it, and that, consequently, they were trespassers. I do not think that an interdict against trespass would prevent a person from going to the houses at the desire, or with the approval, of the occupants of the houses; nor do I consider that consent to proceedings for breach of interdict would, or should, be given, unless it was alleged that the persons complained of had been trespassing in the sense now explained.

MR. CALDWELL: May I ask what right has a proprietor, by interdict or otherwise, to interfere with those who wish to visit the houses of his tenants or with the purposes of such visits?

THE LORD ADVOCATE: The Court, in giving judgment, expressly said that such visits to the houses of tenants would not be interdicted, and the decision proceeded upon the ground that the persons complained of had gone upon private property when no one interested in that property had directly or indirectly given them authority to go there.

WINCHESTER BARRACKS.

MR. W. H. MYERS (Winchester): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what steps are being taken for the rebuilding of that part of Winchester Barracks which was lately destroyed by fire?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The question of rebuilding Winchester Barracks is under consideration, but some little time will probably elapse before all the points which have been raised can be definitely settled. The site, though otherwise desirable, is very cramped for barracks on the scale which modern sanitary science demands, and, moreover, the question of harmonising the buildings with the ancient structures around, without the sacrifice of efficiency, and without involving too large a cost, is one of no small difficulty.

ALLEGED ILLEGAL RAILWAY FARES.

MAJOR L. DARWIN (Staffordshire, Lichfield): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether any action has yet been taken with regard to the alleged illegal railway fares now charged on the Metropolitan District Railway?

MR. BRYCE: The Board of Trade, during the Recess, made every effort to arrive at an arrangement on the question referred to by my hon. and gallant Friend which would be generally satisfactory, but they have ultimately been obliged to instruct their solicitor, who is now in communication with the Law Officers on the subject. The matter is not free from difficulty, and I do not think it is desirable that I should say more at present.

PAROCHIAL WARDS IN SCOTLAND.

*CAPTAIN T. HOPE (Linlithgow): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether the Local Government Board for Scotland have considered, and, if so, with what result, the effect of Sections 10 (2), 12 (4), and 13 (4) of The Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1894, on the position of parish electors in parishes divided into wards, especially on the following points: whether such a parish elector is entitled to vote at an election for as many candidates as there are to be members of the whole Parish Council, or whether such elector is restricted to voting only for the number of Councillors in one ward, and whether a parish elector is entitled to be registered and vote in more than one ward of the same parish?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. O. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): The Local Government Board have given full consideration to these and other questions arising in connection with the first election of Parish Councils, and will shortly issue instructions in the matter. I am advised that there is no doubt that, in a parish divided into wards, a parish elector is only entitled to vote for the number of parish councillors to be elected for the ward in which he votes, and that no parish elector can vote in more than one ward though he may be registered in more than one.

THE INDIAN ARMY.

MR. J. W. LOGAN (Leicester, Harborough): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if a large order for cardigan jackets, to be supplied to the Army in India, has been given to a Leipsic firm; and, if so, what was the reason for sending such an order out of this country at a time of severe depression in Home industries?

MR. H. H. FOWLER: No stores for the Government of India can be ordered in Europe except through the India Office; and no order for cardigan jackets has been issued from the India Office since May, 1892, when a contract for the supply of such jackets was entered into with a Leicester firm.

INDIAN COTTON DUTIES.

MR. C. B. RENSHAW (Renfrew, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether the countervailing Excise duty on Indian-made cottons is to be charged only on counts above 21s.; and, if so, whether he can state what proportion the cotton yarn spun in India above 21s. bears to the total annual production of the Indian mills; whether it is the case that cotton yarns 21s. or under, spun in India at Bombay, and shipped to the port of Rangoon, will be admitted free of all duty, whilst similar yarn spun in this country will be subject to the duty of 5 per cent.; and, whether Indian yarn above 21s. will be taxed on its grey value only, whilst dyed yarns exported from this country, as is the case with turkey red yarns produced in the Vale of Leven, in Dumbartonshire, will have to pay duty on the value of the dyed yarn, and that this will practically make the duty on the Scotch yarn twice as much as the duty on the Indian yarn, and will seriously prejudice the position of the Scotch manufacturers?

MR. H. H. FOWLER: (1) The Cotton Duties Act, 1894, imposes Excise duty on yarns made in Indian mills of any count above 20s. I cannot give statistics of Indian-made yarns above 21s.; but the papers distributed yesterday show that not more than 6 per cent. of the yarns made at Indian mills are of counts over 24s. (2) It is the case that no Customs duty is payable upon Indian yarns conveyed by sea or otherwise from one part of India to another. (3) The Excise duty is levied on Indian yarns as grey yarns, and Customs duty *ad valorem* on imported dyed yarns; but I am not prepared to admit the inferences indicated in the hon. Member's question. I have forwarded the statement of the Scotch manufacturers on this subject to the Indian Government, and am waiting for their observations thereon.

THE COSTA RICA PACKET CASE.

*SIR CHARLES W. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Government of New South Wales have agreed to the form of arbitration in the Costa Rica Packet case settled between Her Majesty's Government and that of The Netherlands?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): The Government of New South Wales has accepted arbitration in the Costa Rica Packet case, and Her Majesty's Government are now in communication with the Colonial Government as to the exact form of the arbitration.

IRISH EDUCATION FUNDS.

MR. W. FIELD: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Government intend to bring in a Bill this Session to remedy the defect in the Irish Education Act, 1892, wherein no adequate provision was made to provide funds; and whether the financial clauses will be made retrospective so as to cover the expenses already incurred by committees putting the Act into operation and enforcing its compulsory clauses?

MR. J. MORLEY: If the hon. Member was in his place on Wednesday he must have heard me answer the first part of his question in the affirmative. In answer to the second part, I will consider whether there is any objection to the proposal.

NEW SOUTH WALES.

MR. T. B. CURRAN (Kilkenny): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he can agree to the Motion for Papers on New South Wales (Legislative Council), standing in the name of the Member for South Sligo?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I regret that we are not able to assent to the Motion of my hon. Friend. In reply to an address of the Legislative Council, requesting publication, the Secretary of State considered that the correspondence was of such a nature that it would not be expedient in the public interest to publish it. When my hon. Friend put down his Motion the matter was again considered, but we still hold that the publication under the circumstances would be inexpedient.

SOUTH AFRICAN MAILS.

MR. J. C. MACDONA: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that in December last information was received by telegraph at Lloyds from Cape Town that the Union steamship *Mexican* struck wreckage off Cape Agulhas, her keel being so greatly damaged that she had to go into dry dock immediately at Cape Town; that this steamer was to have left Cape Town on December 5 with the South African mails but in consequence of this accident her passengers and mails had to be transferred to another steamer; and what steps do the Government propose to take to prevent any further mishaps of a like character?

MR. BRYCE: I hold in my hand a Report of a Court of Inquiry *in re* the stranding of the *Mexican* on a rock off Cape Agulhas. There is not a word about wreckage in the Report. The Court found that the vessel was unnecessarily close to the shore, and recommended the Master to give the coast a wider birth in future. Though the Board of Trade do all they can to discourage such mishaps they are unable to prevent them.

THE CONVICT JOHN TWISS.

DR. KENNY (Dublin, College Green): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether in the case of John Twiss, now under sentence of death in Cork County Gaol, he will advise His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland to grant a respite of sentence till further and more searching inquiry can be made as to the truth of the evidence alleged to be forthcoming since the trial?

MR. J. MORLEY: I cannot advise in the sense suggested in the question. There was a considerable interval of time between the arrest of this convict and his committal for trial; there was a considerable interval between the committal and the conviction; there has been a further considerable interval between the conviction and the date fixed for carrying out the sentence; and I cannot suppose that a respite will produce any fresh evidence that would be material.

DR. KENNY: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that there is a widespread feeling of disbelief in this man's guilt, and that petitions in favour of a respite—I do not now ask for a reprieve—have been signed by all classes of persons in Ireland?

MR. J. MORLEY: I am indeed quite well aware of what the hon. Member says—that there is such a feeling among various classes in Ireland. The existence of a strong feeling of that kind is, of course, no reason why the Government should interfere with the carrying out of the sentence of the law.

DR. KENNY: May I ask whether it is not a reason—not for a reprieve—I do not ask for that—but for a respite, so that the matter may be searched to the bottom, and the public mind satisfied one way or the other?

MR. J. MORLEY: If there were the slightest reason for supposing that further delay would produce fresh evidence, that would be a reason for the course suggested by the hon. Member, but for the reasons I have stated, there have been abundant means of obtaining fresh evidence, if it were to be found, and as there cannot be a reasonable expectation of obtaining such evidence, I cannot advise an extension of time.

Mr. T. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he is aware that from day to day statements are appearing in the newspapers, in addition to the fresh evidence that has been already obtained? Is he satisfied that all these statements have been brought to his notice?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I have examined carefully the statements made from time to time, and I find no such strength in them as to justify any other course than that which is now to be taken.

AN IRISH J.P. WARNED.

Mr. W. KENNY (Dublin, St. Stephen's Green): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, if, in accordance with his assurance given in the House on the 13th August, 1894, he has brought under the notice of the Lord Chancellor of Ireland the conduct of Mr. Neary, a newly created Justice of the Peace, in attending and speaking at a public meeting at Muckinagh, in the County of Roscommon, convened for the purpose of denouncing and boycotting a person who had taken an evicted farm; and whether Mr. Neary still continues in the Commission of the Peace, and, if so, what warning, if any, has he received from the Lord Chancellor?

Mr. J. G. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers, may I call attention to the statement in the question as to the object of the meeting, which is out of order as being a matter of opinion and not one of fact?

The SPEAKER: I suppose the hon. Member who puts it down vouches for the statement as being one of fact.

Mr. W. KENNY: I put a question on the paper on the 13th of August last in the very words of this question, and the Chief Secretary admitted that, as a statement of fact, it was correct.

Mr. J. MORLEY: The Lord Chancellor duly communicated with the gentleman named in the question, pointing out that his action on the occasion referred to was inconsistent with the position of a Magistrate, and warning him against a repetition of such action. Mr. Neary is still in the Commission of the Peace.

Mr. W. KENNY: Will any further step beyond the warning from the Lord Chancellor be taken to ensure that Mr. Neary will not be at the same time an instigator of outrage and an Administrator of the Criminal Law? [*Cries of* "Order!" *from the Nationalist Members.*]

COLLISIONS AT SEA.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, by the existing Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, the compulsory sound signals to be made by vessels (as prescribed by Article 12) are limited to three in number; whether, by the revised Regulations proposed to be adopted, the compulsory sound signals (as prescribed by Articles 15 and 28) are increased from three to eleven in number; and whether the probability of confusion arising in crowded channels or in thick weather from this great increase of sound signals has been duly considered?

Mr. BRYCE: The compulsory sound signals for fog have been increased from three to eight in number. The optional sound signals for vessels in sight of one another have not been increased in number, but, having been fairly tried for some years as optional, will in future become compulsory, signals. The whole of the circumstances to which the hon. Member refers have been duly considered.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES: May I ask to have a reply to my question: is it not a fact that the compulsory sound signals have been increased to eleven?

Mr. BRYCE: I have nothing more to say than I have told the hon. Member. There are two cases that are entirely different; that of the signals used in fog is entirely different from the other.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES: I did not limit my question to the case of fogs. I am asking about compulsory sound signals. Will he answer my question?

Mr. BRYCE: I think the answer I gave sufficient to put the hon. Member in possession of the facts.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the revised regulations for preventing collisions at sea, as set forth in the Board of Trade Circular to Shipowners of 6th March 1894, and as proposed to be made compulsory on British vessels, are identical in all respects with those agreed to be adopted by other countries as the outcome of the Washington Conference; if not, which countries propose to adopt different regulations, and in what respects the differences exist in each case; and, whether the revised regulations, as proposed to be made compulsory on British shipping, represent, so far as is believed at present, the final and complete form of those regulations, or whether they are in their present shape a temporary and incomplete form which it is intended to supplement or alter by further proposals affecting fishermen's lights, steam pilots' lights, or any other, and, if so, which, matters.

MR. BRYCE: The revised regulations for preventing collisions at sea represent the international agreement arrived at after careful consideration and discussion among the various maritime Powers of the proposals of the Washington Conference. The agreement is complete, and the regulations as revised are accepted by all the Powers. The only exception is that the German Government, desiring an addition to Rule 26, which relates to fishing vessels, still raise a difficulty regarding its application. The old regulations as to the lights of fishing vessels remain unaltered, but various suggestions have been made for their amendment, and it has been agreed that these should stand over for subsequent consideration. Steam pilots' lights were not dealt with by the Washington Conference. The revised regulations are complete as far as they go.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Am I to understand that the revised regulations are not complete?

MR. BRYCE: Yes, Sir, they are complete as far as they go, and to the extent they have been dealt with, but particular subjects are excluded from this agreement.

RESTRICTIONS ON CATTLE MOVEMENTS IN LONDON.

SIR A. ROLLIT (Islington, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether the recent restrictions placed on the movement of animals in the Metropolis, involving enormous loss to the home cattle trade of the Metropolitan market, were imposed upon the mere assumption that foot-and-mouth disease existed in the London cowsheds; if the restrictions were imposed upon the suspicion of the disease existing in the London cowsheds, what reason exists for the recession of the safeguard adopted against the spread of disease from such sheds—namely, the order prohibiting the removal of cows from the sheds without an order from an inspector; and whether any assurance can be given that in future the Board of Agriculture will return to its former policy of not imposing restrictions upon a market or district until disease has actually been discovered within dangerous proximity.

MAJOR F. C. RASCH (Essex, S.E.): May I ask before the question is answered whether a certain amount of disease does not exist within 20 miles of the Metropolitan market?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. GARDNER, Essex, Saffron Walden): Yes, Sir. Towards the end of last year outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease occurred within a few days of each other at Rainham, in Essex, Linton, in Cambridgeshire, and Sittingbourne, in Kent. It seemed reasonable to conclude that these outbreaks had a common origin, the metropolitan area being the most probable centre of the disease, and I therefore felt it my duty to prohibit the movement of animals out of that area until such time as a thorough examination of the London cowsheds could be made. I am well aware of, and much regret, the inconvenience and loss occasioned to the Metropolitan dealers and others in consequence of the order, but I felt bound to do everything in my power to prevent a general epidemic of foot-and-mouth disease, a disaster which at one time seemed imminent. The cowsheds order, to which the hon. Member refers in the second paragraph of his question, was directed against pleuro-pneumonia, and it was not revoked until some weeks after the danger of foot-and-mouth disease had passed away. I have not in any respect changed my general policy in these matters, but the precautionary measures to be taken must depend upon the circumstances present in each particular case.

DISMISSAL OF A SCHOOL TEACHER.

DR. J. E. KENNY (Dublin, College Green): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether it has been brought to his notice that Mr. Quinlivan, recently school teacher to the Stradbally (Queen's County) National School, has been dismissed from his post by the manager, the Rev. Mr. Brennan, P.P., without any cause assigned, and that the Rev. Mr. Brennan took forcible possession of the school by breaking in the door; whether the police were present on the occasion; and, if so, for what reason and by whose directions were they present; whether he is aware that Mr. Quinlivan, relying on the recent resolution of the Bishops at Maynooth, that an appeal would lie to the bishop of the diocese in all such cases as the above, did appeal to the bishop, the Most Rev. Dr. Lynch, and the coadjutor bishop, the Most Rev. Dr. Comerford, the latter of whom replied that he could not interfere, and the former did not reply at all; and, whether he will cause an inquiry into this case?

MR. J. MORLEY: This question was only placed on the Paper this morning for the first time, and as it involves communication with the local police, from whom I have not had time to obtain a Report, I must ask the hon. Gentleman to postpone the question for a few days.

THE POTATO CROP IN DONEGAL.

MR. J. G. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that through failure of the potato crop the inhabitants of large areas of Donegal are in acute distress, and that a famine is imminent; whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that during the last 10 weeks representations of the scarcity of food with which the people of these districts were threatened, and from which they are now actually suffering, have been made by the Most Rev. Dr. O'Donnell, Lord Bishop of Raphoe, in a letter which appeared in the *Freeman's Journal* of the 9th January, by resolutions passed at public meetings in the towns of Donegal, Carrick, Kilrea, Dunglass, Muer, Tamur, by resolutions of Boards of Guardians, and by letters of the Member for South Donegal written after a personal inspection of the condition of the people; whether he has been urged by people of all creeds and classes acquainted with the locality, that if the lives of the people are to be saved useful works for the relief of distress must be immediately commenced; and what steps, having regard to the critical condition of the people, the Government propose to take?

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers, will he say whether the Inspectors of the Local Government Board in Ireland have made any Report, first as to the area involved in the failure of the potato crop, and secondly as to the extent of the failure within those areas; and, will he lay their Reports on the Table so that we may know the extent of the distress?

MR. J. MORLEY: I said yesterday that there would be an opportunity before many days of going into this question, and on that occasion I will lay before the House all the information we have. In answer to the question on the Paper, I have to say that the condition of the small holders of land in Donegal has received my anxious consideration, and I have had before me from time to time a number of Reports concerning the county, all of which indicate that, owing to the partial failure of the potato crop distress may be apprehended among some of the small landholders in parts of the county during the spring. Representations as to the scarcity of food and the need of useful works for the relief of the distress have been made both in the Press and to Government, and arrangements are being made to open relief works next month in the Unions of Glenties and Milford.

MR. T. SEXTON (Kerry, N.) asked if the right hon. Gentleman would present a *précis* of the evidence which had been given.

MR. J. MORLEY replied that he would consider the suggestion, but he did not think it would be desirable to lay the whole of the reports before the House.

MR. MACNEILL asked if the Chief Secretary could give an assurance that the relief works would be commenced soon?

MR. J. MORLEY said they would be opened as soon as possible to prevent distress, but on what date he could not say.

MR. C. J. DARLING (Deptford) asked, on what fund the charges for the relief works would fall?

MR. J. MORLEY: On the funds provided by Parliament.

RELIEF OF LONDON UNEMPLOYED.

MR. J. KEIR HARDIE (West Ham) asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in view of the acute distress prevailing and the need for immediate relief, he would make it an instruction to the Unemployed Committee to make an interim report without delay on what measures which might be adopted, either by the Government or Local Authorities, to tide those out of work over the present winter.

MR. J. MORLEY (on behalf of Sir W. Harcourt): It would be premature to determine instructions to the Committee before the Resolution for the Committee is submitted to the House, which it is intended to be as soon as possible.

DISTRESS IN IRELAND.

MR. T. SEXTON asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he would lay on the Table a copy of any resolutions received by the Irish Government on the subject of the distress prevailing in Ireland, and the measures considered necessary by the spread of destitution and the want of employment; also a copy of resolutions received in support of the recommendations of the Irish Land Acts Committee of last Session?

MR. J. MORLEY: A number of Resolutions relating to both of the matters referred to in the question have been received by Government from time to time. My hon. Friend is aware that relief works are at the present moment in progress in several districts in the west of Ireland, and that similar works will be undertaken to alleviate impending distress in other localities. As to the Lands Acts Committee of last Session, I am only awaiting the opportunity to introduce my promised Bill on the subject, and under these circumstances, I hardly think any useful purpose would be gained by laying copies of the Resolutions referred to on the Table of the House.

MR. R. A. YERBURGH (Chester) asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether, in connection with his Scheme for the Relief of Distress in the West of Ireland, he would consider the advisability of constructing light railways from Achill to Belmullet and from Bellina to Belmullet.

MR. D. CRILLY (Mayo, N.) asked whether the Chief Secretary was aware that the light railway constructed under the Act of 1890 between Ballina and Killala, a railway which traversed part of the road which would probably be covered by the line from Ballina to Belmullet suggested in the Question, had proved to be of great advantage to the locality both in the way of passenger and general goods traffic, whether he was also aware that the railway referred to had yielded the Midland Great Western Railway Company, who took over the management of the line, a satisfactory return in the way of profit, and whether the Government would bear these facts in mind in considering the desirability of extending the railway system of North Mayo as far as Belmullet.

MR. J. MORLEY: I am not able to answer the question of my hon. Friend, but I have no reason whatever to doubt that his statements are substantially correct. In answer to the question on the Paper, the object which the hon. Gentleman appears to have in view—namely, the relief of impending distress, could not, for obvious reasons, be attained by the construction of light railways, even if funds were available for the purpose. The form which most readily commended itself to Government for dealing with the approaching distress in portions of the West of Ireland is the opening of small works which will mainly consist of the completion, repairing, and fencing of public roads, and works of this kind can be set in motion without the delay that must necessarily attend the organisation of more ambitious engineering undertakings such as light railways. With regard, however, to the districts referred to in the question, I may observe that relief works are about to be opened in the Island of Achill, and that works of a similar character will be laid out in the poorest parts of the Unions of Ballina and Killala in the early part of March, to be followed by other works which will serve the distressed population of the Belmullet Union.

MR. YERBURGH subsequently asked whether the Chief Secretary for Ireland would, with a view to benefiting the people in the West of Ireland, instruct the local authorities of the district to prepare some scheme that would meet the recurrence of distress in future years.

MR. J. MORLEY said that the hon. Member was asking him to commit himself to a very large and considerable scheme of policy which he was unprepared to do. It was sufficient to meet the present distress as promptly as was possible.

JUSTICES' QUALIFICATIONS.

MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Government intend to introduce a Bill to Repeal the Property Qualifications for Justices in the English and Welsh Counties, as promised?

MR. J. MORLEY, on behalf of Sir W. Harcourt: Yes, Sir, the Government hope to introduce such a Bill in the course of the present Session.

BLUEJACKETS AND SHIPWRECKS.

MR. ROSS (Londonderry) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty whether his attention had been drawn to the fact that on the morning of December 30, on the occasion of the wreck of the Londonderry barque *Osseo*, with the loss of all hands, on the Holyhead Breakwater, within 600 yards of Her Majesty's Ship *Colossus*, no effort was made by the officers and crew to render assistance, and that there was a delay of 40 minutes before the rocket apparatus could be got to the spot; and whether the barque went to pieces 70 minutes after striking; and had any explanation been called for or received from the officers in command of the *Colossus*?

*THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Sir U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH, Lancashire, Clitheroe): I am glad to have this opportunity of publicly contradicting the reports which appeared last month in certain newspapers. These reports having been brought to the notice of the Admiralty, the captain of the *Colossus* was directed to report upon all the circumstances. The explanation which he gave showed conclusively that the officers and men of the *Colossus* were in no way to blame. The violence of the gale was such that lifeboats only could put to sea. It was impossible for boats from the ship to have landed at the Breakwater or in any other part of the harbour. The coastguard station is about 2½ miles from the Breakwater, and, therefore, some distance from the scene of the wreck. The distress signal was first observed at 3.40 a.m., and by 4.20 a.m. the coastguard had arrived at the wreck; but by this time the mainmast had gone over the side and the ship was on the point of breaking up. Owing to these and other unfortunate circumstances neither the boats of the *Colossus* nor the coastguard with their life-saving apparatus were able to render any assistance to the shipwrecked vessel. But it is right to mention that there was no lack of willing hands at the scene of the wreck. The conduct of those assisting at the wreck (including an officer and 18 men on leave from the *Colossus*, and who went at once to the Breakwater on their own initiative) was very praiseworthy.

Mr. Yerburgh.

MR. ROSS, while accepting the explanation as quite satisfactory, asked why guardships were not provided with rocket apparatus?

*SIR U. KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH replied, that in this case there was no need for guardships to carry them, as rocket life-saving apparatus was provided at the coastguard station.

MR. BRYCE here stated that the Board of Trade intended to place complete life-saving apparatus on Holyhead Breakwater.

LOSSES OF BRITISH SHIPS.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade, whether he possesses the means of giving, and, if so, whether he will give as an unopposed Return, a Return showing the total losses of British ships, specifying the causes of loss, for each year from 1844 to 1894 both inclusive?

MR. BRYCE: I possess no material which would enable a Return to be prepared which could have any claim to accuracy. Previous to the year 1874-5 the record of casualties to British ships was incomplete, and was kept, not for statistical purposes, but to afford information for use in connection with the lighting and charting of the coasts of the United Kingdom. The returns of wrecks for 1874-5 and subsequent years, tabulated according to the cause of loss, are contained in the wreck abstracts which are annually presented to Parliament.

LAND BILL.

COLONEL J. P. NOLAN (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the

Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, if his new Bill will contain a provision for allotting land without imposing the necessity of building a house as a preliminary?

MR. J. MORLEY: The hon. and gallant Member does not appear to be aware that under the existing law it is not necessary to build a house as a preliminary to the allotting of land. If the existing law be inadequate in this respect I should be willing to suggest its amendment in my proposed Bill. Sec. 16 of the Labourers' Act, 1885 (amended by the Act of 1892) enables an acre to be allotted to the occupant of a cottage purchased by the sanitary authority; and under the same section an acre may be allotted to any labourer living in a neighbouring village or town if the land be so situated as to be suitable for that purpose.

MOTIONS.

BURIALS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. J. Carvell Williams, Bill to further amend the Burial Laws, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Carvell Williams, Sir George Osborne Morgan, Mr. Illingworth, Mr. Perks, Mr. Barrow, Mr. Channing, and Mr. Egerton Allen.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 1.]

BOARDS OF GUARDIANS (IRELAND.—CONSTITUTION AND POWERS) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. D. Crilly, Bill to amend the Law relating to Boards of Guardians in Ireland, and to extend their powers under the Labourers (Ireland) Acts, and in other respects, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Crilly, Mr. Justin M'Carthy, Mr. Sexton, Mr. T. M. Healy, Dr. Fox, and Mr. Finucane.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 2.]

RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Gerald W. Balfour, Bill to amend the Law relating to the Rating of Hereditaments containing Machinery, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Gerald Balfour, Mr. Coddington, Mr. Holland, Sir Bernhard Samuelson, Mr. Mather, Mr. Tomlinson, Sir William Houldsworth, Mr. Smith Wright, Mr. Strachey, and Mr. Jackson.

Bill presented and read first time. [Bill 3.]

PISTOLS BILL.

On Motion of the Marquess of Carmarthen, Bill to regulate the sale and use of Pistols, ordered to be brought in by the Marquess of Carmarthen, Mr. James Lowther, Mr. Paulton, Mr. Joseph A. Pease, and Mr. Wharton.

Bill presented and read first time. [Bill 4.]

MUNICIPAL FRANCHISE (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. T. M. Healy, Bill to amend the Law relating to the Municipal Franchise in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. Justin M'Carthy, Mr. Thomas B. Curran, Mr. O'Keeffe, Mr. Pinkerton, and Mr. Carvill.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 5.]

LONDON MUNICIPALITIES BILL.

On Motion of Sir F. Dixon-Hartland, Bill for the creation of Municipalities within the County of London, ordered to be brought in by Sir F. Dixon-Hartland, Mr. James Campbell, and Colonel Long.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 6.]

STEAM ENGINES (PERSONS IN CHARGE) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. William Allan, Bill to provide for certificates to persons in charge of Steam Engines and Boilers, ordered to be brought in by Mr. William Allan, Mr. Charles Fenwick, Mr. John Wilson (Durham), Mr. William Abraham (Rhondda), Mr. Joseph Wilson, Mr. Howell, Mr. Wilson Lloyd, and Sir Seymour King.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 7.]

MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER BILL.

On Motion of Mr. H. Fell Pease, Bill to amend the Law relating to Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Fell Pease, Mr. Arch, Mr. Albert Bright, Mr. Rees-Davies, Sir Frederick Seager Hunt, Mr. Labouchere, Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. Joseph Pease, Sir George Chesney, Mr. Villiers, and Mr. Colman.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 8.]

LIQUOR TRAFFIC LOCAL VETO (ENGLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Sir Wilfrid Lawson Bill to enable localities, by a direct vote, to prevent the issue of licenses, ordered to be brought in by Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Mr. Alison, Mr. Caine, Mr. Henry J. Wilson, Mr. Benn, Mr. Billson, Mr. Crosfield, Mr. Charles Fenwick, Mr. Snape, and Mr. Whittaker.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 9.]

CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES PREVENTION ACT (1883) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. T. H. Bolton, Bill to amend The Corrupt and Illegal Practices Prevention Act, 1883, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Thomas Henry Bolton, Sir Henry James, Sir Frederick Milner, and Sir Charles Hall.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 10.]

LIQUOR TRAFFIC LOCAL VETO (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. G. Beith, Bill to enable owners and occupiers in burghs, wards of burghs, parishes, and Districts in Scotland to prevent the common sale of intoxicating liquors, or otherwise to have effectual control over the Drink Traffic within such areas, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Beith, Mr. John Wilson (Govan), Sir Charles Cameron, Sir Leonard Lyell, Mr. Cameron Corbett, Dr. Clark, Mr. Birrell, and Mr. Dunn.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 11.]

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE (IRELAND) ACT (1887) REPEAL BILL.

On Motion of Mr. E. F. Vesey Knox, Bill to repeal the Criminal Law and Procedure Ireland) Act, 1887, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Knox, Mr. Justin M'Carthy, Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. Sexton, Dr. Fox, Mr. Arthur O'Connor, and Mr. Thomas B. Curran.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 12.]

LAND TENURE BILL.

On Motion of Mr. G. Lambert, Bill to amend the Law relating to the Tenancy of Land, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Lambert, Mr. Channing, Mr. Billson, Mr. Luttrell, Mr. Edwards, Mr. Leon, and Mr. William Smith.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 13.]

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. R. B. Martin—Bill to provide industrial agricultural education in elementary schools, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Martin, Mr. Jesse Collings, Sir John Lubbock, Sir John Kennaway, Sir Richard Paget, Sir Bernhard Samuelson, Colonel Kenyon-Slaney, and Mr. Dixon.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 14.]

TECHNICAL EDUCATION (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Dunbar P. Barton, Bill to amend the Law relating to Technical Education in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Barton, Mr. Wolff, Lord Arthur Hill, Mr. Horace Plunkett, rnd Mr. William Kenny.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 15.]

PARLIAMENTARY FRANCHISE (WOMEN) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. J. Cumming Macdona, Bill for extending the Parliamentary Franchise to Women, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Macdona, Sir Richard Temple, Mr. Maclure, Mr. Atherley-Jones, and Mr. Griffith-Boscawen.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 16.]

CHURCH PATRONAGE BILL.

On Motion of Mr. W. Hayes Fisher, Bill to amend the Law respecting the exercise of Church Patronage and the avoidance of benefices, and to further amend the The Pluralities Acts Amendment Acts, 1885, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Hayes Fisher, Viscount Wolmer, Mr. Talbot, Mr. Griffith-Boscawen, Mr. Brodrick, Viscount Cranborne, and Mr. Bartley.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 17.]

POOR LAW (ELECTORS) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Sir Theodore Fry, Bill to amend the Law relating to the disfranchisement of persons receiving out-door relief in return for labour, ordered to be brought in by Sir Theodore Fry, Mr. Joseph Richardson, Mr. John Wilson (Mid Durham), Mr. Paulton, and Mr. William Allan.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 18.]

TECHNICAL EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. J. W. Crombie, Bill for the better provision of Secondary and Technical Education in Scotland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Crombie, Mr. Donald Crawford, Mr. Buchanan, and Captain Sinclair.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 19.]

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

On Motion of Mr. C. H. Wilson, Bill to prohibit the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Charles Wilson, Mr. Perks, Mr. James Stevenson, Mr. Cozens-Hardy, Mr. Charles Fenwick, Mr. John Wilson (Mid Durham), Mr. Woods, Mr. Richardson, Mr. Hazell, and Mr. Snape.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 20.]

ECCLESIASTICAL VESTRIES BILL.

On Motion of Mr. R. C. Jebb, Bill for the Better Regulation of Parish Vestries with reference to the affairs of the Church of England, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Jebb, Sir Richard Webster, Sir Francis Powell, and Mr. Griffith-Boscawen.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 21.]

WORKMEN'S ACCIDENTS (COMPENSATION) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. A. B. Forwood, Bill to provide Compensation to Workmen or their representatives in cases of accidents arising in the course of their employment, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Forwood, Mr. Matthews, Mr. Chamberlain, Sir Edward Hill, Mr. Elliott Lees, and Mr. Tomlinson.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 22.]

PEERS' DISABILITIES REMOVAL BILL.

On Motion of Mr. George N. Curzon, Bill to remove the Disabilities of Peers on succeeding to their titles in respect of sitting in the House of Commons, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Curzon, Mr. Brodrick, and Viscount Wolmer.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 23.]

LAND COMPULSORY SALE (IRELAND.)

On Motion of Mr. W. J. Reynolds, Bill to provide for the Compulsory Sale of Land in Ireland in certain cases, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Reynolds, Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. Matthew Kenny, Mr. Pinkerton, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Knox, and Mr. Arthur O'Connor.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 24.]

COUNTY COUNCILS (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Dr. J. F. Fox, Bill to establish County Councils in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Dr. Fox, Mr. Maurice Healy, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Arthur O'Connor, Mr. Crilly, Mr. Knox, and Mr. Thomas B. Curran.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 25.]

TRAMWAYS (LOCAL AUTHORITIES) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. C. E. Schwann, Bill to facilitate the Working of Tramways by Local Authorities, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Schwann, Sir Joseph Leigh, Mr. Addison, Mr. Neville, Mr. Charles Fenwick, Mr. John Wilson (Durham), and Mr. Byles.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 26.]

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE (IRELAND) ACT (1887) REPEAL (NO. 2.) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Luke P. Hayden, Bill to repeal the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, 1887, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Hayden, Mr. John Redmond, Colonel Nolan, Mr. Clancy, and Dr. Kenny.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 27.]

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. H. Lyle Mulholland, Bill to amend the Law relating to the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors in Ireland on Saturday and Sunday, and for other purposes connected therewith, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Mulholland, Sir Thomas Lea, Mr. Maurice Healy, Mr. William Johnston, Mr. Jordan, Colonel Saunderson, Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien, Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. Pinkerton, Mr. Diamond, Mr. Arnold-Forster, M. Webb, Mr. William Kenny, and Mr. Kennedy.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 28.]

LODGER FRANCHISE BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Herbert W. Paul, Bill to amend and extend the Franchise of Lodgers, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Paul, Mr. Haldane, Mr. McCarthy, Mr. Cobb, and Mr. Lloyd Morgan.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 29.]

INTOXICATING LIQUORS LOCAL VETO (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. W. Johnston, Bill to enable the Ratepayers of any locality to veto the Issue of Licences for the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. William Johnston, Mr. Jordan, Lord Arthur Hill, Mr. Pinkerton, Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. Diamond, and Mr. Wolff.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 30.]

MILITIA BILL.

On Motion of Major F. C. Rasch, Bill to make Better Provision for the Militia, and with reference to the Law of Ballot for that force, ordered to be brought in by Major Rasch, Colonel Brookfield, Sir George Chesney, and Captain Grice-Hutchinson.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 31.]

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Thomas Owen, Bill to amend the Law in regard to the Appointment, Qualification, and Removal of Justices of the Peace, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Owen, Mr. Luttrell, Mr. Howell, Mr. Arthur Williams, and Mr. Lambert.

Bill presented, and read first time. Bill 32.]

MINING EASEMENTS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. L. Atherley-Jones, Bill to amend the Law relating to Mining Royalties and Easements, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Atherley-Jones, Mr. John Wilson (Durham, Mr. Fenwick, Mr. Joseph A. Pease, Sir James Joicey, and Mr. J. Richardson.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 33.]

HANDLOOM WEAVERS (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Torrens O'Neill, Bill to amend the Law relating to Handloom Weavers in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. O'Neill, Colonel Saunderson, Colonel Waring, and Mr. Macartney.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 34.]

OLD AGE PROVIDENT PENSIONS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. G. C. T. Bartley, Bill to provide Pensions in Old Age to the Provident Poor, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Bartley, Sir Frederick Seager Hunt, and Mr. Dampier Palmer.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 35.]

IRISH LIGHTS BOARD BILL.

On Motion of Mr. James O'Connor, Bill to amend the Constitution of the Irish Lights Board, ordered to be brought in by Mr. James O'Connor, Captain Donelan, Mr. Wolff, Mr. Edward Barry, and Mr. Ffrench.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 36.]

PAYMENT OF WAGES BILL.

On Motion of Mr. David Randall, Bill to provide for the Priority of Payment of Wages in Bankruptcy and other cases, ordered to be brought in by Mr. David Randell, Mr. Charles Fenwick, Mr. John Burns, Mr. Woods, Mr. William Abraham (Rhondda), and Mr. Warrington.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 37.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (1888) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. J. Bigwood, Bill to Amend the Local Government Act, 1888, so far as relates to the Promotion of Bills in Parliament by County Councils, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Bigwood and Mr. Howard.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 38].

RIVERS POLLUTION PREVENTION BILL.

On Motion of Sir F. S. Powell, Bill to make more Effectual Provision for Prevention of the Pollution of Rivers and Streams, ordered to be brought in by Sir Francis Powell, Mr. Henry Hobhouse, Sir John Dorington, Mr. Kenrick, Sir John Barran, Sir Henry Howorth, and Dr. Farquharson.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 39].

LABOURERS' DWELLINGS (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Lord Frederick Hamilton, Bill to facilitate the Erection of Improved Dwellings for Agricultural Labourers in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Lord Frederick Hamilton, Sir Edward Harland, and Mr. Ross.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 40].

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS' BILL.

On Motion of Sir Reginald Hanson, Bill to amend the Law relating to Chartered Accountants, ordered to be brought in by Sir Reginald Hanson, Mr. H. L. W. Lawson, Mr. Alban Gibbs, Mr. Cozens-Hardy, Sir Frederick Dixon-Hartland, and Mr. Hulse.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 41].

FARM SERVANTS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. J. Seymour Keay, Bill to provide for the Better Housing of Farm Servants on Farms in Scotland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Seymour Keay, Dr. Clark, Mr. Napier, and Mr. Beith.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 42.]

REGISTRATION LAW AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. F. C. Frye, Bill to reduce the Period of Qualification for Registration for Parliamentary and other Elections ordered to be brought in by Mr. Frye, Mr. Moulton, Mr. Naoroji, Captain Norton, Mr. Pickersgill, Mr. Stuart, Mr. Rowlands, and Mr. Stewart Wallace.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 43.]

MUNICIPAL FRANCHISE (IRELAND NO. 2) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. J. E. Redmond, Bill to amend the Law relating to Municipal Franchise in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. John Redmond, Mr. Clancy, and Mr. Harrington.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 44.]

FRANCHISE AND REMOVAL OF WOMEN'S DISABILITIES BILL.

On Motion of Sir Charles W. Dilke, Bill to establish a Single Franchise at all Elections, and thereby to abolish University Representation, and to remove the Disabilities of Women, ordered to be brought in by Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. William Allen, Mr. Jacob Bright, Mr. John Burns, Mr. Byles, Dr. Clark, and Mr. Keir Hardie.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 45.]

ELECTIONS (SECOND BALLOT, AND RETURNING OFFICERS' EXPENSES) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. W. H. Holland, Bill providing for a Second Ballot in cases where no Candidate has received a majority of the recorded votes, and for the Payment of Returning Officers' Expenses, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Holland, Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. Schwann, Sir James Kitson, and Mr. Channing.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 46.]

BEER ADULTERATION BILL.

On Motion of Colonel Kenyon-Slaney, Bill for Better Securing the Purity of Beer, ordered to be brought in by Colonel Kenyon-Slaney, Mr. Quilter, Viscount Wolmer, Mr. Heneage, Mr. Brookfield, Mr. Round, Mr. Francis Stevenson, Mr. Broadhurst, and Mr. Robert Price.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 47.]

SHOPS EARLY CLOSING BILL.

On Motion of Sir J. Lubbock, Bill to provide for the Earlier Closing of Shops, ordered to be brought in by Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Chamberlain, Colonel Bridgeman, Mr. Cameron Corbett, Mr. Fenwick, Mr. Field, Mr. Kearley, and Mr. Mather.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 48.]

NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES AND IMPERIAL FEDERATION BILL.

On Motion of Mr. R. J. D. Burnie, Bill to establish National Assemblies and Imperial Federation, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Burnie, Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Dalziel, Mr. Lloyd-George, and Mr. Randell.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 49.]

EVICTED TENANTS (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Timothy Harrington, Bill for the Re-instatement of Certain Evicted Tenants in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Harrington, Mr. John Redmond, Mr. Clancy, Mr. Haden, and Dr. Kenny.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 50.]

WORKMEN'S HOUSES TENURE BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Donald Crawford, Bill to make Provision with Respect to the Tenure of the Houses of Workmen in Certain Employments, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Crawford, Mr. John Wilson (Govan), Mr. John Wilson (Durham), and Mr. Caldwell.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 51.]

LEASEHOLD (PURCHASE OF FEE SIMPLE) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. H. E. Kearley, Bill to give facilities to Leaseholders for the Purchase of the Fee Simple of their Holdings, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Kearley, Mr. Brunner, Mr. H. L. W. Lawson, Mr. James Rowlands, Mr. Frye, Major Jones, Mr. Field, and Dr. Fox.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 52.]

COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEAL BILL.

On Motion of Mr. C. H. Hopwood, Bill for the Creation of a Court of Criminal Appeal, and Revision of Sentences, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Hopwood, Sir Henry James, Sir Andrew Scoble, Mr. Leese, Mr. Shiress Will, Mr. Cremer, Dr. Fox, and Mr. John Wilson (Durham).

Bill presented, and read a first time. [Bill 53.]

MARKET GARDENERS' COMPENSATION BILL.

On Motion of Colonel C. W. Long, Bill to extend and amend the Provisions of the Agricultural Holdings (England) Act, 1883, so far as they relate to Market Gardens, ordered to be brought. in by Colonel Long, Mr. Jesse Collings, Sir Frederick Dixon-Hartland, Sir Thomas Esmonde, and Sir Albert Rollit.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 54.]

TIED HOUSES TENANTS' CONTRACTS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. William Allen, Bill dealing with Contracts entered into by the Tenants of Tied Houses, ordered to be brought in by Mr. William Allen, Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. Caine, Mr. Philip Stanhope, Mr. Keir Hardie, and Mr. T. W. Russell.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 55.]

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. G. Howell, Bill to consolidate and amend the Law relating to Parliamentary Elections, and for other purposes relating thereto, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Howell, Mr. James Rowlands, Mr. Pickersgill, Mr. James Stuart, Mr. Charles Fenwick, Mr. Bowen Rowlands, and Mr. Warmington.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 56.]

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND REFERENCE BILL.

On Motion of Mr. W. Thorburn, Bill to provide for the Reference of the Question of the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church of Scotland to the Parliamentary Electors of Scotland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Thorburn, Viscount Wolmer, Mr. Parker Smith, Sir Mark Stewart, Mr. Cochrane, Mr. Baird, and Mr. Maxwell.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 57.]

WORKING MEN'S DWELLINGS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Thomas Wrightson, Bill to give Facilities for the Acquisition by Working Men of their own Dwellings, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Wrightson and Sir Alfred Hickman.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 58.]

POOR RELIEF DISQUALIFICATION BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Samuel Hoare, Bill to remove, under certain circumstances, the Disqualification of Voters in Receipt of Poor Relief, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Samuel Hoare, Sir Seymour King, Mr. Hare, Mr. Maunsell Richardson, Colonel Howard Vincent, and Mr. Thornton.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 59.]

LAND COMPULSORY SALE (IRELAND) (NO. 2) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. W. H. K. Redmond, Bill to provide for Compulsory Sale of Land in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. William Redmond, Mr. Hayden, and Colonel Nolan.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 60.]

SUNDAY CLOSING (WALES) ACT (1881) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. J. H. Roberts, Bill to amend the Sunday Closing (Wales) Act, 1881, ordered to be brought in by Mr Herbert Roberts, Mr. Lloyd-George, Mr. Alfred Thomas, Mr. Herbert Lewis, and Mr. Spicer.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 61.]

TOWN LEASEHOLDS EXTENSION (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Wm. Kenny, Bill to enable certain under-lessees in towns in Ireland to acquire the reversions in their holdings, ordered to be brought in by Mr. William Kenny, Mr. Horace Plunkett, Mr. Ross, and Mr. Yerburgh.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 62.]

MERCHANDISE MARKS (FILES) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. C. B. Stuart-Wortley, Bill to amend The Merchandise Marks Acts, 1887 and 1891, in respect of the marking of Files, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Stuart-Wortley, Mr. Mundella, Sir Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett, and Mr. Fenwick.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 63.]

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS (MARINERS' VOTES) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Elliott Lees, Bill to enable officers and seamen of the Royal Navy and Mercantile Marine to record their votes when by reason of their calling they will be at sea on the day of the poll, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Elliott Lees, Mr. Forwood, Sir Seymour King, Sir Edward Hill, Mr. Kearley, and Mr. Allen.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 64.]

AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. F. A. Channing, Bill to consolidate and amend the Laws relating to Agricultural Holdings in England, and for other purposes, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Channing, Mr. Cobb, Mr. Halley Stewart, Mr. Francis Stevenson, Mr. Lambert, Mr. Hugh Hoare, Mr. Billson, and Mr. Luttrell.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 65.]

OLD AGE PENSIONS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. J. Rankin, Bill for the purpose of establishing a National system of Old Age Pensions, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Rankin, Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Mallock, and Mr. Hozier.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 66.]

CHEAP TRAINS (LONDON) BILL.

On Motion of Sir J. Blundell Maple, Bill to secure the provision of Cheap Trains in London, ordered to be brought in by Sir Blundell Maple, Sir Algernon Borthwick, Sir Frederic Dixon-Hartland, and Mr. Whitmore.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 67.]

PLUMBERS' REGISTRATION BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Lees Knowles, Bill for the National Registration of Plumbers, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Knowles, Sir Algernon Borthwick, Earl Compton, Mr. Dixon, Dr. Farquharson, Mr. Bowen Rowlands, and Mr. Sexton.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 68.]

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE (QUALIFICATION) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Cyril J. S. Dodd, Bill to amend the Law relating to the Qualification and Appointment of Justices of the Peace in counties, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Dodd, Mr. Stansfeld, Mr. Arch, Mr. Channing, Mr. Fenwick, and Mr. Carvell Williams.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 69.]

LABOURERS' (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. J. J. Clancy, Bill to amend and extend the Labourers (Ireland) Acts, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Clancy, Mr. Hayden, and Colonel Nolan.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 70.]

LAND TENURE (ENGLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. William Smith, Bill to amend the relations between landlord and tenant as to the terms of tenancy and conditions of occupation of land, ordered to be brought in by Mr. William Smith, Mr. Billson, Mr. Robert Price, Mr. Woods, Mr. James Rowlands, Mr. Logan, and Mr. Arch.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 71.]

HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES BILL.

On Motion of Mr. S. J. Stern, Bill for facilitating the operation of The Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890, in so far as it relates to rural sanitary districts, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Stern, Mr. Channing, Mr. Logan and Mr. Lambert.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 72.]

TRADE DISPUTES (CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. J. G. Butcher, Bill to establish Boards of Conciliation and Arbitration in Trade Disputes, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Butcher, Mr. Horace Plunket, Mr. Byrne, Mr. Yerburgh, and Mr. Cohen.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 73.]

IRISH EDUCATION ACT (1892) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Dr. J. E. Kenny, Bill to amend The Irish Education Act, 1892, ordered to be brought in by Dr. Kenny, Mr. Harrington, Mr. William Redmond, and Mr. Field.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 74.]

TRAMWAYS (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Jasper Tully, Bill to amend The Tramways and Public Companies (Ireland) Act, 1883, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Tully, Mr. Knox, Sir Thomas Esmonde, and Mr. Patrick Aloysius M'Hugh.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 75.]

SCHOOL BOARD FOR LONDON ELECTIONS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. E. H. Pickersgill, Bill to alter the divisions of London for the Election of the School Board, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Pickersgill, Mr. James Stuart, and Captain Norton.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 76.]

METROPOLIS MANAGEMENT (ST. PAUL. DEPTFORD) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. C. J. Darling, Bill to amend the Metropolis Management Acts, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Darling, Mr. Benn, Mr. Banbury, and Mr. Pickersgill.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 77.]

FACTORY AND WORKSHOP ACT (1891) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Sir Henry James, Bill to amend the Factory and Workshop Act, 1891, ordered to be brought in by Sir Henry James, Mr. Mundella, and Mr. Mowbray.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 78.]

STREET MUSIC BILL.

On Motion of Mr. J. A. Jacoby, Bill to control itinerant Street Musicians, ordered to be brought in Mr. Jacoby, Sir Thomas Roe, General Goldsworthy, Mr. Arnold-Forster, and Mr. J. W. Sidebotham.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 79.]

CROFTERS' HOLDINGS (SCOTLAND) ACTS EXTENSION BILL.

On Motion of Sir W. Wedderburn, Bill to extend to the counties of Banff, Aberdeen, Kincardine, Elgin, and Nairn certain provisions of The Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Act, 1886, and any Acts amending the same, ordered to be brought in by Sir William Wedderburn, Dr. Farquharson, Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Crombie, and Mr. Seymour Keay.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 80.]

BOARDS OF CONCILIATION BILL.

On Motion of Sir J. Lubbock, Bill to confer additional powers on Boards of Conciliation and Arbitration, ordered to be brought in by Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Charles Fenwick, Mr. Howell, Mr. Mather, Sir Samuel Montagu, Sir Francis Powell, and Sir Albert Rollit.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 81.]

MARKET GARDENERS' COMPENSATION BILL.

On Motion of Mr. F. A. Channing, Bill to extend the provisions of The Agricultural Holdings (England) Act, 1883, so far as they relate to Market Gardens, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Channing, Mr. Lambert, Mr. Billson, and Mr. Cobb.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 82.]

ORDER OF THE DAY.

ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO HER MAJESTY'S MOST GRACIOUS SPEECH.

MOTION FOR ADDRESS. ADJOURNED DEBATE.

[Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Main Question, 5 February, see page 15.]

Debate resumed.

MR. GOSCHEN (St. George's, Hanover Square), said,—I wish in the first instance to recall to the attention of the House the terms of the Amendment of my hon. Friend, of which the operative part is this:—

> "And we humbly express our regret that Your Majesty's Ministers have shown no appreciation of the extreme gravity of the present situation."

It is to that point that I propose to address the observations which I wish to submit to the House. Hon. Members have been perfectly within their right—we cannot be surprised they have done so—in suggesting various measures, various remedies. We have had suggested bimetallism, reconstruction of local finance, advances to landlords, an improvement of the Agricultural Holdings Act. It would be impossible, even if this Debate were to extend to six days instead of to two, adequately to discuss all those measures. What we have to do is to consider the attitude of Her Majesty's Government and of the Gentlemen who support them, and to see whether in their general conduct, in the speeches they have made, in the measures which they have proposed, they have shown us they appreciate the gravity of the situation. A guileless Member of the Government Party, the hon. Member for the Woodbridge Division, stated that Her Majesty's Government have shown their appreciation of the gravity of the situation because they have put a paragraph in the Queen's Speech and have appointed a Commission. I do not know whether his constituents, who have given him a mandate, as he told us, to support the Government under any circumstances, and therefore he will give them his vote on this occasion—I do not know whether his constituents, if they are suffering farmers, will think the Government shows its appreciation of the gravity of the situation by a paragraph in a later part of the Queen's Speech and by a Commission appointed in 1893. I will not at this moment question the place which even this paragraph occupies in the Queen's Speech, but it comes after the destruction of the Welsh Church and after the Local Veto Bill. Have the Government during the Recess shown that they have actually realised the situation? We have had plenty of evidence as to the state of mind of Her Majesty's Ministers. There had been copious streams of rhetoric flowing during the Recess, and many of the speeches were so good that I read them with pleasure. The Home Secretary (Mr. Asquith) has, to use an actor's phrase, been on tour. He has made six, or, I think, eight, speeches during a few months, and in not one of those speeches did he show the slightest evidence of appreciating for one moment the position of the agricultural community. There was one sentence in one speech in which he scoffed at the differences of opinion amongst the Conservative Party with regard to any remedies that could be proposed. There was no allusion to the situation which has now been brought to his attention. The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir William Harcourt) made one most able speech towards the close of the Recess. I find no allusion to agricultural depression in that speech. The Government Party met at Cardiff. They had a grand celebration, they drew out their mandate and their programme. I find no allusion whatever to the grave state of the agricultural population. It is not in the mandate. Her Majesty's Government go about with a mandate in their pockets, and they take this mandate out and consult it before they address their supporters. If there was any allusion in that mandate to agricultural depression, it appears to have been written in such small letters that they were not able to discover it, as Local Veto, Welsh Disestablishment, House of Lords Destruction, were written in such large letters. But the guileless Member for Woodbridge said the Government had shown their appreciation of the situation by putting the question of agricultural depression into the Queen's Speech. I wonder when it dawned upon them that it ought to go into the Queen's Speech. I wonder when, in the course of time, the President of the Local Government Board was consulted as to what ought to be done with regard to agricultural depression. At all events, it was not during the speech-making time of the Recess; it was only when the Queen's Speech came under consideration that agricultural depression turned up. But it turned up with a proposal. Not only do the Government express their sense of the agricultural depression, but they actually make a proposal: they propose the construction of light railways. I am under the impression—but it may be an erroneous one—that when the late Government proposed light railways for Ireland it was called a "sop." I do not know why the term "sop" is now changed. When the Government is in Office the "sop" becomes a "great boon" to distressed agriculture. But there are two things I wish to know about that boon. I wish to know what time it is going to be dealt with. I think that is a fair question to ask on the present occasion. And I want to know, further, where the money is to come from—for we have been told by the President of the Board of Trade, who has given us some valuable information on the subject, that the funds are not to be provided by the State. Now, as regards time, I notice it is proposed, before this Light Railways Bill is taken up, to deal with the Bill for Disestablishment of the Welsh Church and with the Irish Land Bill. Might we not humbly ask on behalf of the British agriculturists—as considerable time has already been devoted to the Irish Land question, and as English Agriculture is now suffering acutely from depression—that the first place should be given to a question so deeply affecting that suffering English Agriculture, as the Government clearly think this Bill does? Will the Government appeal to their Irish friends below the Gangway to allow them to put this measure first? Sometimes the Government find their friends amenable. I remember an occasion when the Budget of last year was in difficulties, when it almost ended in a ridiculous *fiasco*, on account of the Spirit Duties, the Members below the Gangway were appealed to by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and they responded by consenting to postpone for twelve months their opposition to the Spirit Duties. Therefore, the Irish Members show a spirit of conciliation when they are approached by Her Majesty's Government: and so I ask the Government to consent to put this Light Railways Bill first amongst the measures they are going to bring in. We will not be put off by an offer of time after Twelve o'clock. There is sometimes a little trick played in that way with the Opposition. A measure is put down for consideration after Twelve o'clock; we think it is a measure of importance, that it ought to be passed, but that it requires consideration, and so we refuse to allow it to be brought on after Twelve o'clock. Then that is called Obstruction, and the responsibility for the loss of the measure is put upon us, because, as it is said, we obstructed it. That has been done by the Government over and over again. But I claim that we should have proper time for the consideration of this important measure. Then there is another question. If the Government intend to put the cost of the light railways on the rates I do not think they will be backed by a majority in doing so. I doubt whether they would have a majority of the persons interested, but there is no chance of there being a British majority in their favour. But what about the Irish Members on that particular question? Are they going to support the Government in putting light railways on the rates in Great Britain, when English, Scotch, and Irish money paid for light railways in Ireland? I think it was £600,000 that was voted for that purpose in Ireland. Is it possible that, even if the Government were to say that they refuse public money for the same purpose in England, the Irish Members would support them? Surely Members from Ireland would feel that, as light railways in Ireland had been paid for out of public money, English agriculturists were fairly entitled to the same treatment. I should like to see the hon. Member for the Woodbridge Division or the hon. Member for East Northampton going down to their constituents, and saying, "Oh; the Irish Members received public money for their light railways; but English agriculturists are refused the same terms; they must pay for their light railways themselves. Therefore, you may look upon it as a certainty that the Irish Members will have the justice, the generosity, the good feeling, to support for English agriculturists the same terms which they received themselves. So much for light railways. There is another matter — I mean the concern which the Government showed for agriculture in the appointment of the Royal Commission on Agriculture, so tactfully presided over by the President of the Local Government Board. We have had some revelations as to the conduct of the business of that Commission. But at all events I rejoice to think that we have the testimony of the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the Commission is composed of able and experienced gentlemen, and, therefore, if a majority of these able and experienced Commissioners support my right hon. Friend the Member for Sleaford, and vote against the colleague of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I suppose we may take the testimony of these able and experienced gentlemen, even against the authority of the President of the Local Government Board. Then here is a point to which I attach considerable importance as regards what I may call the animus of the Government. From the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and from the speech of the Prime Minister, it would appear as if the Government had hopes of having the Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture early in this Session. I think I understood the right hon. Gentleman to say that he had such hopes.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): I did.

MR. GOSCHEN: If that was the view of the right hon. Gentleman then it is patent that he and his colleagues must have had the prospect of the larger question of agricultural depression being before them at the commencement of this Session. Then what time of their future programme have they set out and marked out for the consideration of this question? When the order of the Bills was settled; when Lord Rosebery spoke of the various Bills that would get attention; that Welsh Disestablishment was put first, according to the mandate; that Irish Land and Evicted Tenants were to come next; that the Liquor Traffic Veto Bill was to come third; and when Ministers talked about their going on with those Bills as being like ploughing the sea sands, where in their programme was a place allotted to the depressed industry of agriculture? Where was the time they reserved for that question? There is no hope held out of any consideration being given to the question of agricultural depression either in the Queen's Speech or in any of the statements of the Ministers; and I say, therefore, that the Government have shown an inadequate sense of the gravity of the present situation. But it is not only that. We have heard of great Constitutional questions to be considered; that we are to reconcile all our differences about the House of Lords; and to settle in what way the proposals for disestablishment are to be executed; but, as for agricultural depression, let us not bother about that—that is in the hands of such able and experienced men. And now there is another Commission. or rather a new Committee, to be appointed on the question of the unemployed. We have Committees and Commissions in every direction to take up and report on subjects that are not in the Newcastle programme. The right hon. Gentleman gave an indication that this new Committee would not only report upon the clauses of a Bill, but would indicate the defects of the Bill as to local finance, and so would guide him in the choice of the financial measures for finding the necessary funds to carry out the object in question. I listened in astonishment to the right hon. Gentleman. I should like to have seen the right hon. Gentleman's predecessor—the right hon. Member for Midlothian—appealing to a Commission to assist him in the framing of his Budget. This is a new system. Let us beware that we do not drift into a situation in which we would have Committees sitting almost permanently to advise the Government as to measures with regard to which the Administration ought to take the full responsibility. I have had some experience of public life; I have filled three great offices, and I am proud to think that never during my time of office in any one of those three great departments which were intrusted to my care did I consent to or admit of a Royal Commission, and only in one case did I allow a Committee of this House. We must be wary in allowing Ministers to diminish their responsibilities, in shoving them not only upon Committees of this House, but even on outside gentlemen, who, however eminent or qualified to examine causes, should not enter into competition with Ministers in the construction of policies. I would point out to the Chancellor of the Exchequer that it is to him that we must look, at all events, for the construction of such finance as may be necessary; and his own Party will naturally look far more to him, after what he has done to guide them aright, than to Commissioners or to those who have not the same responsibility as he has. The House will see the importance of this question. Commissions are admirable for analysing causes; for diving into the facts; for dealing with intricate matters; for investigating all the circumstances where less scientific methods would be applied by the Members of this House. There are numerous cases where Commissions have rendered great services. But I demur to Commissions which are to fish for a policy, or which are to relieve the right hon. Gentleman or ourselves from responsibility. Now, apart from their speeches, and apart from this Commission, what has been the conduct, the language, and the attitude of Her Majesty's Government with regard to local finance, to Imperial finance, in its bearing on the agricultural interest? What has been the language of their supporters in the agricultural counties with reference to either promoting or disturbing those good relations between the farmer and labourer and the farmer and owner—indeed, between all the three interests, which are one of the fundamental conditions of agricultural prosperity? I need not labour the question of agricultural depression. It exists. We have heard striking proof of it in the course of this Debate. Already we have the admission of Her Majesty's Government; we have the admission of the friends of the Government. It is notorious and admitted on all sides, and that depression extends, it appears to me, to all three classes who are interested in British agriculture. It has been stated that the labourer hitherto has not suffered from that depression; but that now there are large discharges of agricultural labourers, and in that way the third class are beginning to feel the depression which before rested upon the other two. Now it ought not to be a subject of discussion—it ought to be a truism accepted in all parts of the House—that the prosperity of the labourer depends to a great extent on the prosperity of the farmer, and that the farmer and labourer and owner are all interested together. Is that a doctrine which is acknowledged by the other side of the House? [*Ministerial cries of* "Yes."] Not by all; I wish it were so. I believe that half the present difficulty which the Government have in appreciating the situation is that they have separated in their minds the different classes of agriculture. Even last night the hon. Member for Somerset (Mr. Warner) made this observation:—"We do not care so very much about the owner." At the same time let us remember this—that the hon. Member for East Northamptonshire said that he blamed the owners for not having reduced their rents in good time. I put it thus. The owner is wanted for two public purposes besides his own purpose. He is required to put capital into the land. He is required to put down his rents, if it be necessary; and he is required to give a certain amount of employment. Therefore I may lay this down—that an impoverished landowner in a district means disaster in that district. The impoverishment of the landlords must have an effect; and, therefore, if hon. Members opposite have stirred up the labourers in any parts to believe that their interests are different from those of the landlords they have done something which runs counter to the general interest of the agricultural community. They know best to what extent that has been done. Let us have no more talk against the "greedy owners"—against owners as owners—if we look to them to reduce the rents and to make their contributions to local taxation. After all, there is one common local purse. That local purse is supplied from the rates contributed by the farmers and the landlords; and if a landlord is impoverished, if rents are so diminished that that local purse is drained, if there are so many more contributions demanded from the farmer through increased rating, actual or comparative in relation to profits, it establishes a dwindling local purse to the disadvantage of the whole community. That being so, let me establish another proposition, which ought to need very little insistence on my part. As in an agricultural community all these interests are closely related one to another, so the interest of the whole Nation is bound up to an enormous extent with the prosperity of the agricultural community. I will not go into the history of the various movements in prices and the ebbs and flows of national prosperity; but I doubt whether it can be shown that the other industries, or the Nation at large, have ever flourished when there was a serious depression in agriculture. It has been illustrated over and over again that the depopulated country districts send their shoals of men to increase the number of unemployed in the towns; small traders are unable to do the same business; it acts and reacts in a hundred ways. Therefore the agricultural interest is one which deserves from the notice of this House the deepest thought and consideration in these times, when its position is what my right hon. Friend calls "a national tragedy." That is the position we have to face, and therefore it is in a common spirit that the urban and the country Members look at this question. The Members of the urban constituencies will notice in the Amendment the word "unemployed." It has been inserted by my right hon. Friend from the point of view that there is an increase in the unemployed, due, in the first place, to the direct discharge of agricultural labourers in consequence of the present situation, and, in the second place, to the influx into the towns of men who have not been able to find sufficient employment in the villages where they were born. That being the case, what has been the attitude of Her Majesty's Government with regard to local finance? Local finance affects local industries and the well-being of the whole Community; and what is the attitude of hon. Gentlemen opposite with regard to increased burdens on the ratepayers? I hope I do not express myself too strongly when I say that their attitude has been to further and promote every movement that would involve increased burdens on the rates, and to denounce the Measures which would relieve the rates. I am prepared to establish both those propositions. Owing to the vicious idea, which I believe is now beginning to be eradicated from their minds, that the rates come merely from the pockets of rich men—we have seen symptoms that the idea is being eradicated, and it is a most important truth to bring home to them—owing to that idea they have been perfectly satisfied that every improvement which they desired to be accomplished should be made at the expense of the rates. What is their attitude with regard to voluntary schools? They wish for rate-supported schools; and it is due to the action of the Unionist Party that voluntary schools have been maintained, and that the burden imposed upon the ratepayers has not been increased by many millions sterling. I wish the ratepayers of the country to understand the attitude of the Government Party with regard to this question. Are they prepared to abolish the voluntary schools? I know that they have a passion for acting in that direction, for two reasons—because in the first place, they always prefer compulsory to any spontaneous action; and, in the second place, they prefer undenominational to denominational schools. They may be perfectly right; but at all events it will be noted that in carrying out their policy, if they should be successful, they would put an increased burden on that common local purse which, if it is to be supplemented continually by the owners and the farmers, will largely decrease the sum which goes to the payment of wages. You must be prepared to pay that price; and I do not knew whether the country and the agricultural labourer himself will be prepared to pay it. It is a very different thing from the free education which we were able to give to the agricultural labourers, and which has been a distinct assistance to every agricultural labourer in the country. Then there is a Bill in the Government Programme with regard to election expenses; and these expenses are to be thrown on the rates. They are quite right from the past point of view, which was that the rates were paid by those whom they did not mind bleeding. They regard a vote as being more valuable almost than work. They have a mania for giving votes on every possible occasion. Votes are valuable, and so are wages. If the farmers are so pressed by the payment of rates they may have to discharge labourers; and it would be rather a poor consolation for a man to sit as a discharged labourer on the Parish Council which will be voting the rates, but by so doing be further diminishing the margin of employment. I wish now to ask what was the attitude of the Government on the Parish Councils Bill? Of course, that Bill is held up before us in the discussion because it was through it that golden grain was to wave—to be sold at 20s. a quarter, it is true. But the attitude of the Government and of their supporters during the whole of our discussions on that Bill was this: "You gave as much power as possible to those who are not rated, and objected as much as possible to the limit of the rate." They did not appreciate the gravity of the situation. They did not see that agitators would come down to agricultural districts with bundles of leaflets and voting papers. The labourers were told: "Now comes the time of your emancipation; you can get rid of the squire and the farmer, and put your own men on the Parish Council, and have a go at the rates." This local purse, which is of so much importance to the agricultural community, was to be drawn upon for every social object possible. I rejoice to think that in a great many parts of the country the common sense of the labourer has sent the agitator about his business. I know a case where, under, I think, central influences, the Radical Party thought they would carry a majority on the Council. They refused to listen to any compromise by which a fair arrangement would be made; they listened to the advice of the emissaries of those who wished, in the Parish Council, not to promote concord, but to see the defeat of the squire and the parson. But the agitator was defeated, and not one of this Party was returned to sit on the Parish Council. There were, however, labourers on that Parish Council who were put there by the common sense of the whole community. The Parish Councils Act will not have the effect, I trust, which some of its advocates hope — namely, to establish that diversity of interest with regard to which so much was said. This, then, has been the attitude of the bulk of the Party opposite with regard to local finance, and as regards pushing every measure, partly from a philanthropic and kindly sense, perhaps, partly from an agitating sense, to increase the rates. What has been their attitude to those measures for diminishing the rates? I think we have made one great step forward in this Debate, though it involves a recantation on the part of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for India. It is true that the recantation was made by the President of the Local Government Board last night, but it is made, not only on behalf of the Government, but in entire accord with the facts of the case. What is the position? It was urged that £4,000,000 was given in relief of rates. How was that represented? Was it represented as a general benefit to the agricultural community, or as benefiting the Municipalities? Was it acknowledged that the large portion which went to the Municipalities might assist them, rightly or wrongly, in carrying out many of those Municipal reforms which lie near the heart of many hon. Members on both sides, such as sanitary and educational reform, and technical education? The great portion of this £4,000,000 went to the Municipalities of towns in different parts of the country; but how was it represented? It was represented as £4,000,000 given to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's friends—the Tory landlords. We must not be too severe on hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite; those expressions were used in the heyday of their electoral turmoil, and ought to be passed by without much notice, perhaps. But we have been constantly charged that it is in favour of the owners of land that those £4,000,000 were given. How much went to the agricultural districts? We were told last night by the President of the Local Government Board that the amount was one-fifth. The right hon. Gentleman was good enough to give the final blow to that fallacy which has prevailed so long, and which has prevented so much good work, I believe, in reconstructing local finance. It is the fallacy which has been embodied in 100 leaflets, and which has even figured on the lips of responsible Statesmen—even Lord Rosebery spoke of £4,000,000 having gone to the Tory landlords. We know, however, that the Prime Minister gets his information second-hand; at all events, I think that this Debate will have been of enormous advantage if it establishes this one proposition — that when relief of rates is given one-fifth only goes to the assistance of land. That involves a very serious consideration, which I must put to my hon. Friends behind me. They claim further relief to local taxation. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has quoted me as having said that I had shown my whole hand, and was, therefore, prevented from giving any further relief. But I will remind the right hon. Gentleman that he has disturbed the *status quo* ; that he has in his Budget so reconstructed the burdens on land that, whatever my wish might be, I consider my hands to be free, notwithstanding the declaration which the right hon. Gentleman has quoted. That is perfectly reasonable, I think, after what has happened. But I ask my hon. Friends and the House to consider what is the measure of the advantage which they got from the relief of local taxation? That relief amounted to 6d. in the £1 on the rates. The rateable value of the United Kingdom I should put at £160,000,000 net. If you give £4,000,000 on £160,000,000 the amount comes to 6d. in the £1 ; and, therefore, you may take it that you may spend £4,000,000 before you give a relief of 6d. in the £1 to the ratepayers, if it is to be distributed under the old system equally among the ratepayers. The Mover of this Amendment showed the enormous burden on land in the shape of rates, and that the power of land to bear them is infinitely less. If that is so, let the House remember that, supposing we were proposing to give another 1s. to the agricultural ratepayers in the ordinary way, that proposal would involve £8,000,000. That is impossible, and I frankly say so. It is no use disguising it. We may give further relief, but it cannot be given, in my judgment, in the old way of further relief, because you must give five times the amount before you get that one-fifth from the purse of the nation. If the agricultural ratepayer requires to be relieved, he must be relieved. If justice demands it, justice he must have; if expediency demands it, for that expediency some remedy must be found. I do not say it is impossible ; nothing is impossible to justice and expediency; but it must be done in a different way. Local finance may have to be reconstructed with a view to the agricultural interest, and to the demands of agriculture. I am sure that my hon. Friends will not see in what I have said the slightest indisposition to consider their claims ; but I want to show them that the simple diminution of the rates by further subventions would be so costly that they themselves would be indirectly suffering under a great disadvantage from the remedy applied in that way. Let me give an illustration. Look at the fall in prices. If we say 6d. in the £1, what does it mean to the wheat grower? It means, at the most, 6d. an acre. Granted that a remedy must be found—and responsible Statesmen are bound to find it—they must look in some other direction. I need not say many words about other remedies. There is the question of assessment. I doubt that very much, and I am confirmed in that by the views of the President of the Local Government Board. The Assessment Committee have not taken these steps.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. G. J. SHAW-LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central) said, that the evidence given before the Royal Commission showed that, with slight exceptions, every Assessment Committee had reduced the assessments in proportion to the reduction of the rent.

MR. G. J. GOSCHEN : There are cases where the assessments have not moved down rapidly enough, and where the difficulties of appeal are — I shall not say insuperable — extremely difficult. If that be so there would be no remedy in that direction. But there are other remedies suggested. There are the remedies of light railways, and of lending money to the landlords for the improvement of buildings, &c. There is the remedy of the redemption of the title rent-charge and several other remedies which seem, so far as I can gather, to have gained what I may call preliminary favour with some Members of the Commission on that side of the House. What does that mean? It means that the owners of land should get some assistance for carrying on the works in their particular districts. The Member for East Northamptonshire (Mr. Channing) yesterday stated that money was required for the reconstruction of the land. At all events, money was required for the better cultivation of the land—for the placing of land in a better condition than it is now. To do that money is required. Where is the money to come from? There are three sources. You may have recourse to the owner's private resources, or you may have money which would be lent in the ordinary way, or you may have recourse to the public funds. Many will agree with me that the last remedy is the one to which recourse should be had last. There are then the two other means of obtaining the money to accomplish the object in view. What do you require when you want credit—when you want to borrow from private sources? You require confidence that the land is a good interest. You require to inspire the idea that land is a safe interest. I see in the confession that the landlords require public money, two admissions. First, they cannot borrow it easier elsewhere, and that they have no means to do the work with themselves. It is an acknowledgment of the waning confidence in land. We know that land was a good security in times past, and we know that in every country the possession of land is one of the safest bulwarks of credit. But you denounce it as a crime to have the unfettered ownership of the land. Every device is resorted to to diminish the value of that ownership. The landlords are called land sharks, as the owners of, for instance, water shares are called water sharks. If such language is used, if such tactics are resorted to, what confidence is there, what is there to attract capital to the land? You may legislate as you please, but without confidence you will not restore prosperty to the land. Look at the somewhat absurd position in which we are to be placed. The landlords are to pay money into the Imperial Exchequer on one hand, and then the State is to lend the money back again. The landlord is first to be impoverished and then he is to be helped. Look at the Budget of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Was it not founded on the view that the landlords could easily bear the burdens of the right hon. Gentleman? Was he not told that he had to deal with an industry in the last stage of depression? We know of the case where the Death Duties had to be paid three times over, with the result that the labourers were discharged. I know of a case where that process is now going on, where, owing to the payment of these heavy Death Duties, the heir has found himself unable to continue the same scale with regard to those employed as his predecessor. I will not labour this point. I say that in the Budget of the Chancellor of the Exchequer no proper regards have been had to the distressed state of Agriculture, and even now the Government does not recognise the gravity of the situation. I gather that public money is to be lent to the landowners or to those who trust in land—I gather that that is one of the proposals of the Royal Commission. If that is so, I rejoice at it, and, at all events, we, the Unionist Party, may claim some share in enabling that money to be lent on favourable conditions—at a lower rate, on lower conditions than it could have been lent before we took Office. The credit of the country has been so increased that now money is cheaper than it ever has been before. It runs through all finance. Capital has been cheapened by conversion, and capital is the great necessity of the national life. The Chancellor of the Exchequer never wearies in representing me as the champion of the wealthy interest, as the friend of capitalists, and he has sometimes sought to destroy any authority which my experience of affairs might otherwise have by so representing me. He has sought to impair that authority by holding me up always as the friend of capital. I have cheapened capital, at all events, without resorting to his *fin de siècle* finance. I have not had any of his gradations, his equalisations, his aggregations, and all the other ations under which he has destroyed that financial fabric which the genius of the Member for Midlothian built up. At all events, I have this satisfaction—that I have reduced the interest on capital for good or worse—I believe for good. He has frightened capital. I do not know which service he will consider the greatest—the cheapening of capital or the alarming of it. The unused millions at the Bank of England do not represent the savings of prosperity; they represent the timidity of the capitalists in the present situation, and we are face to face with this problem. There is the capital that cannot be employed, and, on the other hand, industry is checked because it cannot proceed without that capital. I repeat, the Government have not realised the gravity of the situation. They have now, under the pressure of Metropolitan Members, consented to give a Committee. We are not surprised. It is the method which they have so often exercised with distinct advantage to their political existence. On this occasion, as on others, we shall know later what is the duty of this Committee. We heard with great interest the speech of the Member for West Ham. The hon. Member said he hoped the Government would undertake the consideration of a large number of measures which have been recommended by the particular associations with which he is connected. We have not only a Newcastle Programme; we have an Unemployed Programme; we have a Fabian Programme; we have the programme of the Fabian Society. Are we going to extend this inquiry into all parts of the United Kingdom, or is it going to deal only with the present emergency? Is it to range over the whole of our social system? Are we to have a special inquiry, or are we to go into a great variety of subjects? I think it will be impossible. We cannot inquire into all the dreams of social reformers. Still, they have been able to pay a few moments' attention to a question of this kind. I hope one effect of the Debate yesterday and to-day will be to convince the Government that there are questions agitating the public mind of infinitely deeper importance than, for instance, the Disestablishment of the Welsh Church, and that among their own supporters there is a desire—if only they can get their head—to deal with these social questions. Let us be agreed upon this. The difficulties are stupendous, but what we have a right to demand is that the Government shall bend their energies—that they shall give their attention to questions on which the very life of the Nation depends. We are called upon here, by the admission of a Cabinet Minister, to "plough the sand;" but what the nation wants is that it should be able again to plough the land. We are not content at least to see, without such efforts being made, any increase of derelict farms and the ruin of the Agriculturist interest. Is another year to be spent by the Government on these other objects, which seem to absorb their whole time, instead of devoting their energies to questions of this kind? They are tinkering architects of a constitutional edifice; they are jerry-builders trying to raise up a crasy edifice at a moment's notice, and preparing to undertake the demolition of eccelsiastical structures at cost price. These are their objects, but instead of that we have these grave problems before us. Does the House realise what it means if the situation should continue as it is, and it should be impossible to grow wheat? Are you content to see a much further diminution in the area of wheat-growing land—of the constituents of bread in this country. Thank Heaven, we are able from beyond the seas and from every possible quarter, to feed the country. But a *minimum* should surely be grown at home. A country with 35 millions of mouths to feed ought to have some reserve at least within its own shores, however mighty its fleet, and however certain the security of its shores. Fancy the disaster to a country like this, where it might be necessary almost to give up cultivation. It is a stupendous question, and I think it is right that we should face it, and that no preconceived notions, no formulas, should prevent us from facing the consequences. I have not spoken of the remedy propounded by my right hon. Friend, the Member for Sleaford. But, whatever remedies are proposed, they should be treated with earnestness, they should not be scoffed at, but should be looked at as an earnest endeavour to solve a question as grave as has ever been submitted to us. But, whatever the remedies may be, we ought all to set to work—to bend our energies, to do the most that in us lies, in order to meet what, I think, we are bound to admit is a most grave and difficult situation. Above all, do not let us forget that, though we may pour torrents of public money into the lap of a disheartened industry, though we may pass reams of Statutes, we shall effect no good unless confidence and hope are at the bottom of it. We must show that, in our belief, good feeling between capital and labour, good relations between employer and employed and between class and class, are indispensable conditions of national prosperity, crowned and cemented, as they ought to be and will be, by the common-sense of the British people and sanctified by the charitable feeling of mutual regard and esteem.

Mr. W. R. BOUSFIELD (Hackney, N.) thought hon. Members had reason to congratulate themselves that in the course of the debate a new stage had been reached in regard to the question of the unemployed and industrial depression. For the first time the Government had been compelled to face it. In 1892, when he was standing at a by-election, he referred in his address to the difficulty of the unemployed, and the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland went out of his way at that time to ridicule the importance of the question and the suggestions which were put forward in that address. Since that time the right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues had treated the whole subject with an amount of scorn quite consistent with the attitude they adopted towards it before they came into office. Various Boards of Guardians, including the Board in his own constituency of Hackney, had suggested the purchase of land on which they might provide work for the unemployed; but the right hon. Gentleman who was now the Secretary for India did nothing but pour cold water on the scheme, and refuse to advance it in any way when he was the President of the Local Government Board. In the course of the Debate reference had been made to certain Statutory powers available to Boards of Guardians for this purpose, but the action of the Local Government Board had been such as to prevent the Guardians, who were anxious to take advantage of these powers, from putting them into operation, thereby excluding the possibility of a solution of the difficulty in that direction. He was, therefore, justified in saying that the present acknowledgment of the difficulty by the Government was a sort of death-bed repentance, for it was only under the pressure of circumstances that they had been compelled to take notice of the matter and to grant a Committee. The first thing that Committee would have to do would be to inquire into the amount of distress existing. But that, after all, would have absolutely nothing to do without the solution of this question. Last year when the matter was under discussion the Leader of the Opposition spoke in support of a scheme for making Local Authorities registering agents for the unemployed. That was a simple step, and would have required only a single section Act to carry it out. The Government, with the support of the Leader of the Opposition, might have taken that step, and thus have ascertained with absolute certainty what was the magnitude of the unemployed problem, or whether such a problem really existed. It was a simple remedy put forward by both sides of the House, but it met with nothing but scorn on the part of the Government, who, instead of passing this short Statute, which would have given them full information, were now going to appoint a Committee of Enquiry. It was perfectly obvious that the solution of this question did not depend upon the circumstances of the moment. The first practical step which ought to have been taken was the registration of the unemployed, and it was recognised that the true policy in the matter was one of cautious experiment. No one was prepared with a cut and dried scheme; and the Government, he thought, might take a practical step, and they ought to take it, by allowing the Local Authorities to make with their own money their own experiments in any way they chose. But in conformity with their whole policy since they had been in power, the Government had produced a dilatory scheme, and were doing nothing when most people were agreed that something ought to be done. The position might be looked at from two points of view. From the humanitarian point of view, they were all anxious that something should be done. But it was also an urgent matter from the purely conservative point of view that they should address themselves to this problem. There was a large army of unemployed people in the East of London, and in a time of great scarcity of food—if such a time should ever come—the unemployed might be driven to attempt and to do things which would not be compatible with the security of the State. Therefore all those who had any conservative instincts—and he hoped that some Members on the other side of the House had—all those who wished to preserve the existing fabric of society ought to take precautions to guard against a danger of that kind. The hon. Member for West Ham was admittedly a Socialist of a communistic type—he meant by this that the hon. Member, in common with the Independent Labour Party and many Trade Unions, advocated the nationalisation of capital, of the land, and of the means of production. Very possibly the hon. Member was pressing forward the question of the unemployed in furtherance of the policy of Communistic Socialism. Why should men who were earning good wages go out of their way to pass Socialistic resolutions like that passed by the Trades Union Congress at Norwich last year? It was not because they thought they would be better off themselves under a new system, but looking around they saw that in the existing state of Society there was a very large number of persons who could not earn wages and who were in distress; and that state of things constituted a lever which forced them on to pass Socialistic resolutions. If they admitted that this question of the unemployed could not be solved, that in existing social conditions there must always be a large number of unemployed people who could not improve their position, they would supply those who were endeavouring to bring about a different Communistic state of society with a very strong argument in support of their views. Therefore, if they could only deal with this question of the unemployed in a reasonable way, in a way that would satisfy the national conscience, they would frustrate the policy of Communistic Socialism of the hon. Member for West Ham and others. Those who were conservative enough to desire to preserve our existing institutions were therefore bound to deal with the question of the unemployed.

*MR. J. W. LOGAN (Leicester, Harborough) thought that it would be found impossible to separate the great question of the unemployed from the Land Question. He was glad to think that statesmen on both sides of the House would shortly have to turn their attention to the question of the unemployed. They would have to consider how it was that, side by side with an ever-increasing accumulation of wealth in the country, masses of people were living on the border of starvation. Many people were beginning to realise that a very large proportion of the ever-increasing wealth of this country was represented by land values, and that those who owned the land extracted from the masses a larger and larger amount of their earnings in the form of a tax for permission to use the land, without the use of which they could not exist. People were realising that it was they who added value to the land by their work, and that others reaped the reward and charged increased rents in respect of that added value. The wit of man could not possibly devise a more certain means of creating misery and destitution and of adding to the ranks of the unemployed. It might be news to some to hear that the gross annual rental derived from land in England was threefold what it was at the beginning of the century. Out of a total of 76 millions derived from land in England 21½ millions belonged to 642 people. In contrast with this wealth there were 8,000,000 people living in a condition very little above that of starvation, between 700,000 and 1,000,000 persons were out of employment, and the roll of paupers numbered 800,000. He thanked the Government for the Committee that was to be appointed, but he warned them that, sooner or later, a searching investigation would have to be made in order to ascertain to what extent our present system of land tenure was responsible for the misery which they all deplored, and which was a disgrace to our common humanity. On the subject of agricultural depression they all agreed that it was a national calamity, but they disagreed as to its causes and also as to the remedy. There were four points of view from which the question could be approached. There was the point of view of the general public, that of the landowner, that of the farmer, and that of the agricultural labourer. Two remedies had been suggested on the other side of the House. There was, first, the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford, that a duty should be imposed on imported barley. In whose interest did the right hon. Gentleman propose to impose that duty? Was it in the interest of the general public, or of the farmer, or of the agricultural labourer? He did not suppose that the right hon. Gentleman would venture to ask for a subsidy for the benefit of the landowners. He much doubted whether it would be possible to persuade the farmer or the labourer or the public that such a tax would be a blessing to them. Last year 8,748,000 quarters of barley were imported into this country. A tax of 5s. a quarter net amount would produce £2,187,000. Unless the management of estates had altered very much during the last 50 years, the bulk of that money would find its way into the pockets of the landowners. On the other hand, the shipping interest would lose nearly a quarter of a million, and the farmers and labourers would be seriously handicapped in competing with the foreigner in the production of pork and bacon. If the subsidy was intended for the benefit of the farmer and the labourer, then hon. Gentlemen opposite could very well give them the same subsidy by a reduction in rent. There was another remedy suggested, and that was to give relief from the burden of local taxation. Were hon. Gentlemen opposite not aware that today men in the towns were grumbling greatly at the enormous burden thrown upon them for the maintenance of men driven into the towns from the country? And did they seriously mean to think that they could with any justice ask those men to pay their rates so that they might have a little more money to give to their labourers? He had heard that argument given as a reason for enhancing the price of corn, but history was against that contention, for it proved that when wheat was selling in this country at 72s. a quarter, the wages of agricultural labourers were only 7s. or 8s. a week, while to-day, though they were not paid as he thought they ought to be paid, they were receiving 14s. to 15s. a week. He would ask hon. Gentlemen opposite, then, was it on behalf of the farmers that they asked for this relief in taxation? Was it not possible that, as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford had said, the relief would go to the landlords? In 1891, the right hon. Gentleman said in answer to the hon. Member for Shoreditch—

> "The hon. Member left out of account altogether the burden of rates, for he declared that the rates fell upon the occupier alone, and were in no way paid by the land. The occupier pays a certain sum for the use of the land, and in that sum are included rates as well as taxes. The effect on the owner is that if the rates are high, he gets less rent, and if they are low, he gets more rent; and I maintain that it would not be difficult to show that ultimately the whole burden of the rates falls upon the owner of the land and upon nobody else."

The hon. Gentleman who moved the Resolution said, that the chief cause of the depression was that in other countries the land was more lightly burdened than it was in England. That was true to some extent, but he wanted to ask the farmer, what was the chief burden he had to bear. Was it not rent? The average rent paid over the whole area of land in England was 24s. an acre. Therefore, he said to the farmer—

> "If you need relief, go to the man to whom you pay your rent. By paying you admit that you are making a surplus over and above the cost of production."

If there was not such a surplus, there should not be any such thing as rent. The farmers in 1893 paid £57,000,000 in rent, and the mere fact of their paying that rent meant either that there was a surplus over and above the cost of production or else that they had paid that enormous sum out of capital. If it was paid out of capital they should appeal to this Government to grant them land courts in which their rents might be revived. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford seemed to think that his hon. Friend the Member for East Northamptonshire was very hard when he said that landlords had not made the reductions they ought.

MR. CHAPLIN (Sleaford): I did not say that. I disputed the contention that the fact that some landlords had not been sufficiently prompt in reducing rents was the cause of the depression.

MR. LOGAN said he had no intention of misrepresenting the right hon. Gentleman. He was one of those who believed that the depression was largely a question of rent. He wanted the farmers to realise that the 40 per cent. reduction in rent did not meet the case of a 40 per cent. fall in prices. In 1893, the rent paid for agricultural land amounted to about £760,000 less than the sum paid in 1890, a year which gentlemen opposite never wearied in calling a most prosperous year. [*Opposition cries of* "No, no!"] He had always understood them to say so, though he did not agree with them. Taking the whole cultivated area of England what did that reduction mean? It averaged 4d. an acre. That was the landlord's sacrifice. What about the farmers? In 1890, wheat yielded on the average £6 3s. per acre. In 1893 it yielded £4 5s. 7d., a difference of £1 17s. 5d. That was the wheat growing farmer's sacrifice. He did not say that the sacrifice of the graziers in the Midland counties was so great, but he knew it was a disastrous year with them and with dairy farmers throughout the country. It was within the mark to say that the total loss for the whole cultivated area was 30s. an acre.

MR. J. LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): Where do you get your figures?

MR. LOGAN said he had taken the figures from statistical abstracts. Was there any other industry in which the manufacturer was content to buy the raw material at a reduction of 4d., while he was compelled to sell the manufactured article at a loss of 30s.? When the farmers learned that land was a raw material, and that its cost should bear some proportion to the price of produce, he hoped they would take some steps to help themselves. Was it not on behalf of landlords that relief was sought? If it were, he asked them to recognise hard facts. Agricultural rents were to-day higher by £2,000,000 than they were 50 years ago. The sum collected for agricultural rent to-day in Great Britain was £57,000,000, as against £32,000,000 at the commencement of this century. This meant that the selling value of agricultural land, at 25 years' purchase, was £625,000,000 more than it was at the commencement of the century. With what grace, then, could it be asked that the people should bear the burdens of the landowners?

MR. J. K. WINGFIELD-DIGBY (Dorset, N.): May I ask where the hon. Member gets his figures?

MR. LOGAN: The Income Tax Returns.

MR. WINGFIELD-DIGBY: They do not show the reductions made in rents.

MR. LOGAN said, he sympathised as much as anyone with those who were suffering from the present conditions of Agriculture; their suffering was deplorable, not only in itself, but also on account of its far-reaching consequences. It seemed to him to be discreditable that we should be importing enormous quantities of agricultural produce while land in this country was going out of cultivation, and while in some parts of the country thousands were asking in vain for work. He ventured to think that the day would come when the people would take this matter into their own hands, and would insist that the land of the country should be put to its best use; when the people would re-enter into their possession, and the cry of distress would no longer be heard, because men would no longer have to pay a large share of their earnings for the mere right of existing upon God's earth.

*MR. J. LOWTHER said, he understood the last speaker to say he had taken some of his figures from the Income Tax Returns; but unfortunately in these Returns no mention was made of the large abatements in rents that were often granted, and he very much questioned whether the House would be disposed to rely on the minute calculations made with the view of showing the proportion which the reductions bore to the total acreage of the country. How far the tops of mountains might be made available for the purposes of the calculation, and how far accommodation lands close to towns could be brought in on the other side, were matters which should be gravely scrutinised before the statistics cited, and the conclusions to be deduced from them, were taken into account. With regard to the Royal Commission on Agriculture, his right hon. Friend the Member for Sleaford put down a Notice of Motion to prevent a Committee being appointed without discussion; and he himself gave a similar notice with a further object, because he was strongly against an appointment at all. He wanted action of some kind, and not needless inquiry, which did not carry us any further. One objection to a Committee would have been that so few Members of the House approached agricultural questions with a free hand or an open mind; that objection would not have applied to a fairly constituted Commission, but in appointing a Commission the Government constituted it in a manner which was egregiously and scandalously unfair. It was a packed Commission, from which was rigorously excluded any one person who would have been representative of the majority of the agricultural community. In St. James' Hall, in 1892, there was held a National Agricultural Conference, at which some subjects — bimetallism amongst them — were discussed with more or less languid interest, and others, such as Land Courts and other Radical proposals, were snuffed out. None of the minor remedies, so-called, met with substantial favour at the hands of the assembled 2,000; but there was one resolution which aroused general interest, and was adopted by a large majority, and it was in the following terms:—

> "That the unfair competition of untaxed foreign imports with home produce and manufactures, which are subject to heavy internal taxation, is an anomaly and an injustice; and by causing the diminution of the demand for home labour, and the contraction of the purchasing power of the community, adversely affects every trade in the country. And this conference is further of opinion that all competing imports should pay a duty not less than the rates and taxes levied on home production."

These opinions may be sound or not; but no one would deny that they were the opinions of a large majority of the owners and occupiers of land; yet the Commission did not include one representative of these opinions. Any person suspected of Protectionist leanings was rigorously boycotted by the Government. It might be all very well to say that Protection was wrong; but, if inquiry was to be conducted with an approximation to fairness, the boycotting of all who held these views was a scandal. As to suggested minor remedies, that of Light Railways scarcely deserved lengthened debate. He very much doubted whether they would hear any more of it; and he did not believe that any Chamber of Agriculture would entertain the idea of a farthing being charged to the rates for a so called boon of that kind. He even doubted whether agricultural Members on the Ministerial side of the House would support such a proposal. As to suggested changes in land tenure, he called those remedies of a dog-eat-dog character, in which groups of the agricultural community were to be used up in the attempt to injure each other. They had heard of paltry subventions in aid of rates, and also of agricultural banks, but he questioned whether any one would lend money to persons who were endeavouring to make land pay by growing wheat at £1 a quarter. There was one suggested remedy in which he heartily concurred, and that was the proposal of the right hon. Member for Sleaford, as to the imposition of a duty upon barley. It would be a step in the right direction though it would not go far enough. But agriculturists were told that their mistake was in not adapting themselves to the needs of the times. It was said to them:

> "What is the use of growing wheat; it is impossible to grow it at a profit; why don't you turn your hand to dairy produce, fruit-growing, and turn more attention to poultry production, and the increased production of meat?"

This was what was called the "egg-and-jam" theory. No doubt, in some favoured places, under proper conditions, the production of fruit might be successfully attempted; but as far as the great mass of the agricultural land of this country was concerned the suggestion that it should be devoted wholesale to the cultivation of what was associated with *petite culture* abroad was ridiculous in the extreme. He might be told that any proposal to impose taxes upon imported articles in this country, especially in connection with food, would merely put money into the pockets of the landlords. He need not waste the time of the House in contradicting that, because it was notorious and palpable that increased production in this country would involve the employment of a vast deal more labour. The distress caused by the depressed condition of Agriculture was by no means confined to rural districts. The small towns in the provinces felt the depression acutely. Country shopkeepers said that their customers did not deal with them on the same scale as years ago because of the depression in Agriculture. Manufacturers who supplied the shopkeepers found their orders diminish, and had to employ fewer hands at lower wages. Agricultural depression had become a national calamity, for it was felt by all classes of the community. He might be asked what his remedy was. Two years ago he explained it in a letter which he addressed to a meeting of agriculturists, and which he would now summarise. He urged the imposition, on all foreign imports that came into competition with home industries, of duties based on the principle of a sliding scale, which would automatically cease to be levied on any commodity, included amongst the necessaries of life, as soon as the market price exceeded the figure at which it could be produced at a profit in this country. As far as wheat was concerned, Protection, if adopted, would have to be adopted all round. The price of bread now, with wheat at 20s., was substantially the same as it was when wheat stood at 40s., and his proposal would simply restore matters to what they were when wheat was 40s., which was the figure indicated by the Royal Commission, he did not mean the "Packed Commission," but the Duke of Richmond's Commission, as being the price at which wheat could be produced at a profit in this country. The doctrine of Protection was endorsed by all the rest of the world with the exception of the inhabitants of these Islands. He would read a short extract from a remarkable speech by the late Prime Minister as recently as May 12, 1890, at the presentation of a testimonial to the hon. Member for Rochdale, chairman of the Cobden Club, who was an hon. Gentleman whom they all respected, and if the subscription list had been open to "unbelievers" no one would have contributed his mite more heartily than he, for the hon. Member's public career, however much he differed from him, he regarded with respect. Mr. Gladstone in the speech referred to, said—

> "Free Trade has receded and Protection has gained ground in the United States, and, I yet more regret, and much more regret, to say, in the Colonies of Great Britain. . . . Let us look at the actual state of things at home and abroad. When we pass over the countries of the world and the countries of Europe, together with the great Republic of America, we see that, although the doctrines of Free Trade have never been unconditionally accepted, yet there has been a kind of qualified progress towards them. That progress first was exchanged for a stationary condition of opinion, and of late opinion has been actively retrogressive."

The late Prime Minister found two subjects for consolation in the survey of the state of opinion abroad with respect to the freedom of trade—

> "In some of our Colonies," he said, "I believe the principles of Free Trade are still cherished, they have been cherished up to this time under circumstances most disadvantageous in the great and important Colony of New South Wales. If, however, we look to the world at large, the picture is not an encouraging one. Do not let us conceal from ourselves that this country is almost at present the solitary citadel of Free Trade."

In a letter to M. Léon Say in March 1894, Mr. Gladstone emphasized his views, for he said—

> "It is a matter of sincere concern to me, in retrospect, to measure the ground that has been lost within the last 25 or 30 years with respect to this great subject both on the Continent of Europe and among the larger portion of what is commonly called the Anglo-Saxon race. On this great subject my own country remains an almost solitary witness to what was once regarded as an established economic truth."

It had been contended that, inasmuch as our foreign trade enormously exceeded our home trade in value, we ought to take no steps that would benefit the latter at the risk of endangering the former. But had those who adopted that line of argument ever looked into the question for themselves? He should like to call the attention of the House to what that eminent fiscal authority, Dr. Giffen, said upon the point. Dr. Giffen showed that our total national income amounted to 1,200 millions sterling a year, while the probable maximum value of our foreign trade was only 140 millions per annum. If hon. Members would compare the 140 millions with the 1,200 millions they would see that the foreign trade of the country amounted to only a small proportion of our total trade, and, as Dr. Giffen went on to say, that we should still remain a great and a wealthy nation even if the whole of that trade were swept away. The long and the short of it was, as Dr. Giffen pointed out, that our home trade amounted to 10 or 12 times as much as our foreign trade. He need scarcely say that he did not contemplate for a moment the possibility of our foreign trade being swept away; but he had always contended that reasonable means should be taken to maintain the staple industries of this country while, at the same time, securing that we should obtain a cheap food supply. It would be strange, indeed, if, in an Empire like ours, which extended over one-fifth of the earth's surface, we could not obtain markets for our manufactures, while securing a sufficient supply of cheap food. He would humbly suggest to Her Majesty's Government that, as we now had in our Colonies and Dependencies populations who were only too anxious to be allowed to trade with us upon reasonable terms, we should afford them facilities for obtaining our goods in return for them giving us cheap food. He had always frankly expressed his opinions on this point, whether they were popular at the time or not; and he suggested to the Government that, instead of sheltering themselves behind Royal Commissions, they should bring in some wise and practical measure which would secure the prosperity of the country.

Mr. W. SMITH (Lancashire, N., North Lonsdale) attributed the present low prices to over-production. During the last few years unprecedented crops of grain had been produced, and that fact fully accounted for the low price of wheat. The right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down had suggested that the price of bread was not regulated by that of wheat; but he could assure the right hon. Gentleman that a four-pound loaf of excellent bread could now be bought for 3d. The reason that the price of bread did not more closely follow that of wheat was that the people of this country had changed their habits, and that they no longer made their own bread, but purchased it ready made from the bakers. He thought that it would be a good thing if cottagers and even well-to-do people were to revert to the old custom, and were to make their own loaves, in which case they would more fully obtain the advantage of a cheap wheat supply, because the price of flour did follow closely that of wheat. It must be remembered that there had been in this country what amounted practically to a revolution with respect to land. Until a few years ago our farmers had an absolute monopoly of the corn trade of the country; but, owing to the opening up of foreign countries by the great numbers of railways which had been constructed and to the improvements in shipbuilding, wheat could now be brought to us from 3,000 miles away at a cheaper rate than it could be carried a few hundred miles some years ago. In these circumstances, the land of this country no longer occupied the exceptional position it formerly enjoyed. In his opinion, the price of land in this country, whether for sale or for hire, must come down to the level of that of other countries, and until that came about nothing but disaster could befall our agricultural interest were we in future to deal with the land in our obsolete manner, and to tie our farmers down hand and foot by restrictions upon the way in which they were to cultivate their farms. The rents in the country had not been reduced to the extent that they ought to have been. He knew cases of personal friends of his own who farmed land in Essex, and would have liked to continue, who repeatedly applied for reductions of rent, but did not obtain them, until their capital was all gone, and then the landlord offered them the farm at their own price. What that meant was this, that, consciously or unconsciously, that man would extract from the land all its capabilities until in the course of years it became valueless. At the present time there was land in Essex which would be dear rent free. It would take a lifetime, and the free application of capital, before such land could be reinstated. There must be a tribunal established, to which, in case of need, the tenant might be able to have recourse; that in itself would bring about a great redress. Then the conditions under which the farm was held must be changed. It must be competent for a man, so long as he did not exhaust the fertility of the soil, to use his ability and his judgment without all the customary trammels. He must be able to adapt the cultivation of his land to the surrounding circumstances, to grow that for which there was a demand and for which the district was best suited. This freedom conceded, the farmer would be able to farm not only to his own satisfaction, but also to the great benefit of the community and the landlord as well. Rent, truly described, was what remained after the cost of production. He cared not how rich the land might be, how fair the climate, or how near to the door there might be a food market, land uncultivated must be absolutely worthless, and a nuisance to the neighbourhood. It followed as a consequence that the man who cultivated the land, the labourer who contributed his physical energies, and the tenant, who applied his capital and brain power, were entitled to the first enjoyment of the fruits. But that was not the case to-day. Rent was put first, and until that fact was grasped, any remedy that might be applied would prove illusory. He believed there was abundant room for more than double the population on the land at present there; but it was useless to ask the farmers to throw their capital freely into the land until they had security that they would be able to reap the fruits of their industry.

*MR. E. H. HULSE (Salisbury) did not rise to support the Amendment of the hon. Member for the Basingstoke Division from any selfish point of view; he did so in his capacity as Member for a city which was the centre of a large agricultural district, and which felt most acutely the distress and depression surrounding it on all sides. The Report which was laid on the Table of the House last Session respecting the condition of the County of Essex displayed such a serious state of affairs that we were entitled to doubt whether such loss and depression could be allowed to continue, and that within 10 or 20 miles of the greatest centre of population in the world, there should be land going out of cultivation, and that farmers should be unable to make a living even when they got the land rent free. The County of Essex had secured a great increase of population amongst the working classes who were employed in the Metropolitan area, and yet in spite of these exceptional advantages, the farmers in that county could not keep their heads above water. How immeasurably worse must it be in the district surrounding the city he had the honour to represent (Salisbury), and which had already furnished the subject of a Special Report by a Parliamentary Commission? The facts in that Report were uncontradicted and revealed a state of affairs which was deplorable, and he had no hesitation in saying, in some cases, heartrending. He looked upon the waking up on the part of the Government to this serious and crippled condition of agriculture as somewhat in the nature of a death-bed repentance. What was the remedy foreshadowed in the Queen's Speech? The construction of Light Railways. But they were entitled to ask how, when constructed, the Light Railways were to be paid for. If out of local rates, there were many districts, and notably that with which he was identified, where it would be absolutely impossible to levy the rate; and, unless the Board of Trade looked more carefully after the Railway Rates in the interest of the producer and consumer, there was a danger of the Light Railways falling into the hands of the monopolists, and they would in no way affect the stream of foreign produce which was being brought into this country at lower rates to the detriment of home produce, an injustice which was crushing the farmer and ruining the market gardener. What the agricultural community needed was immediate and speedy relief, such relief as would give greater assistance to the local rates which were now placed upon the land, whereas everything in the Report seemed to point to the burden of local rates upon the agricultural industry as a great cause of the present difficulties. It would be just as sensible to put a duty on English iron and steel as to heap fresh burdens upon agriculture. It was not only the agriculturist who had suffered. The tradesmen in our country towns bitterly complained of the state of trade, of protracted credit, and of increasing insolvencies, and a marked diminution in the volume of trade throughout the district. The subject before the House was, in his opinion, a matter which was not merely a grave one, but was really of national importance. Agriculture, as the late Mr. John Bright had pointed out, was still the greatest industry in the country, and even a moderately bad harvest meant a difference of 10 millions of money to the country. It was important that they should attempt to grapple with the evil now, when they found that a good harvest did not even give to the producer sufficient to pay interest on his capital, and when, in places, land was actually stated to be assuming prairie value. Even rent free the farmer could not in many cases square his wages account, still less get interest on the capital which he had put into the land; and there never was, in his opinion, a subject more worthy of the attention of a responsible Minister of the Crown. It was only by some speedy relief that the industry could be saved from entire and absolute obliteration, our farmers from bankruptcy, and our labourers from the inevitable results which must follow from a constantly falling market. Labour would always, in the long run, suffer from such an evil as this. There was a lessened demand for labour; wages in many parts did not amount to more than 10s. or 11s. a week, being lower than three years ago; and, during the present winter, the applications for outdoor relief had shown a steady and marked increase. In the city which he himself represented (Salisbury) the tradesmen were almost entirely dependent on the agricultural industry, and they stated that they had had one of the worst winters on record. He appealed to the Government to give some relief in the present very serious condition of affairs.

THE SPEAKER having returned after the usual interval.

*MR. DODD (Essex, Maldon) said, he should regret it if the hon. Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire succeeded in obtaining a duty on barley, and he should regret exceedingly the imposition of a duty upon wheat. It was true, as had been stated, that large numbers of our people were unemployed in the agricultural districts, and those of them who were obliged to apply to the Poor Law Authorities for relief, had to comply with the conditions of Poor Law Orders of many years standing, the principal Orders rather more than fifty years old. The result was that the Poor Law as it had to be administered by the Boards of Guardians, was not in harmony with the general feeling of our population, and was, he thought, in some matters unnecessarily harsh. Before the new Poor Law came into operation there had undoubtedly been great abuse of out-relief which it was necessary to stop, but he thought that the danger to be anticipated from out relief was now to some extent diminished. As the law stood, Boards of Guardians had very little discretion. The substance of the Order of 1844 dealing with this matter was, that no able-bodied person could be relieved by means of out-relief unless the case was one of sudden or urgent necessity. Then afterwards, exceptions were made, such as the case of widows, but the Boards of Guardians could not legally give out-relief even for a short time to able-bodied persons, nor could they give any relief to a person who was not destitute. What was happening now in our country villages was this—labourers, who owing to bad times were out of work, and who had homes and families, asked the Boards of Guardians for a few weeks, temporary out-relief; the Boards of Guardians were in many cases anxious to grant that relief, but they had no right to do it, inasmuch as the applicants were able-bodied. Besides, so long as a man had any furniture, though it be but a table, chair, or bed, he was not destitute in point of law. The objection to the system was, that if these temporarily unemployed did break up their home and go with their families into the workhouse, it was impossible for them, or at all events very difficult for them, ever to get their furniture together again and re-establish their homes. From a mere monetary point of view it was an expensive policy to break up the home of a working man, and from a humane point of view there could not be two opinions. In addition, when a family had been brought into the workhouse, the strong probability was that we should be rearing a race of paupers. Unless it was absolutely necessary, therefore, it was certainly not only a harsh policy, but an expensive policy. The Orders could be altered by the Local Government Board, and he was anxious to know from the Government whether it was intended that the Order to which he had specially directed attention and the other Poor Law Orders, which contained many anomalies, should be laid before the Committee it was proposed to appoint, or whether the Local Government Board would deal with them on their own initiative, and apart from the Committee. He believed the time had come when the Poor Law Orders, and particularly the one which dealt with out-relief, should be revised. His suggestion was not that out-relief should be granted generally—that would be too dangerous a policy—but that some discretion should be given to the Boards of Guardians, in the exercise of which they might give out-relief for a few weeks to those able-bodied men whom they had reason to think would be mere temporary applicants, and who would, in their opinion, be likely to get work if relieved. That would be an economical policy; it would certainly be a humane policy. He might perhaps be allowed to add that he regretted that in the course of the Debate there should have come from the other side of the House anything in the shape of a complaint that the Government did nothing for agriculture, because Her Majesty's Government were endeavouring to do something which might be of use to some agricultural districts of the country. There was no doubt that in some parts of Essex a light railway would be of great use. He was not prepared to say the ratepayers would be willing to guarantee the cost, but he thought they would be willing to do something if they were assisted by Her Majesty's Government to some extent out of public funds. There were funds. We always had funds when we wanted to make a railway in Uganda, and personally he would sooner vote for some railway in England than he would for one in some district in Africa. He, however, felt that if light railways were to be made, the ratepayers should assume some responsibility. Unless the ratepayers were prepared to do that, the Government would be well advised if they did not risk public money on the undertakings. In many districts the difficulty with regard to railway extension was the claim which was put in by a landowner when a railway was about to be made on his land. The smaller landowners, to which class he happened to belong, were always tempted when a railway came near to them to make the most of their position. The larger landowners now for the most part fully recognised the necessity of light railways in order to stimulate, in some way, agriculture, and were prepared to part with their land at its market value. He thought it would be found by the Government when they introduced their measure that they would be obliged to have some strong compulsory powers enabling land to be purchased at the market value. He was a little astonished to hear some hon. Members complain that Her Majesty's Government had done nothing for agriculture, because he recollected being present during the passing of the Budget Bill, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer saying, when he made one or two concessions to the farming interest, that all the gratitude then expressed on both sides of the House would vanish very shortly, and hon. Members opposite would say that the Government did nothing to benefit the farmer. Hon. Gentlemen opposite thought the Chancellor of the Exchequer was dealing with them unjustly. They said the right hon. Gentleman was mistaken if he supposed they were ungrateful when he reduced the assessment from 4d. to 3d. Gratitude of that kind gradually vanished, and it seemed to have vanished so completely in this instance, that hon. Members said nothing had been done for the farming interest. He was not satisfied. Though he was not satisfied, he was bound to say something had been done, and what had been done made him wish for more. He was glad to know it was intended to appoint a Committee, and he hoped to hear, before the Debate closed, that the Government would do their best to secure an interim Report from the Committee, so that something effective might be done at once. In conclusion, let him say he was anxious to hear a definite statement from some right hon. Gentleman as to what was intended to be done with regard to the Poor Law Orders. He asked the Government to say, either that the Local Government Board would take the responsibility of going through those Orders, and if they arrived at the conclusion that temporary out-relief might be given, subject to proper restrictions, they would take it upon themselves to allow it to be given, or that, if they thought the task beyond the powers of the Local Government Board, they would see the Committee to be appointed had full power to inquire.

MR. C. W. RADCLIFFE COOKE (Hereford) said, there was no doubt that the complicated character of the Amendment had led to the protraction of the Debate. It would have been much better if the three subjects, each one of which was worth a Debate to itself, had been separately considered. He proposed to say a few words upon the agricultural part of the Amendment. He regretted to say he found himself in great part in opposition to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Thanet. It was much too late, and the subject was much too large, to consider whether Protection or Free Trade was the better for this country at the present day; and he would remind those hon. Gentlemen who sat on the Opposition Benches and were in favour of Protection that the depression of agriculture was not confined to this Free Trade country. Depression was felt very much in France, and hon. Members who had read the most interesting statement in the *Times* a few weeks ago would know that in the Western States of America the farmers were almost on the verge of bankruptcy. Nor did he quite agree with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Thanet, when he somewhat deprecated the multiplicity of minor industries. It was with farming as with all other businesses. As facilities of conveyance were increased from time to time, and we received from places where they could grow them cheaper commodities we used to grow here, so we were bound to change to some extent our system of farming. He did not for a moment say that fruit or jam would save the British farmer; but there were some kinds of produce now imported into this country which could, if there were better organisation among the farming classes, be grown here and which the distributing classes would buy. Only two or three hours ago a young gentleman spoke to him on that very subject. His friend had been to some of the large stores in London which procured their eggs from France and Italy, and he was told that, although the stores would have to pay something more for English eggs, if they could get a regular supply of them they would buy them preferably to foreign eggs, because the quality of them would be generally better. But what did the stores managers say? That they could only get English eggs in driblets; that there was no organisation among the English farmers to secure that a regular supply should be sent up to the stores. There were such organisations abroad. The farmers sent their eggs to some central stores, from which they were despatched to England, and it would indeed be well if some such system were also established in this country. The same gentleman also told him that he went to the manager of the largest Co-operative store in existence, and asked him whether they bought English bacon and hams. "No" said the manager, we get them from Denmark; because "we are sure of a large and regular supply." It seemed that in Denmark the farmers, after fattening their pigs, sent them to some central stores where they were properly killed and cured, and the hams and bacon sent out in large quantities to the customers. Was there any reason why similar factories should not be established in this country? What was wanted, was not Government interference, but the qualities of energy, enterprise and activity amongst the farming classes themselves. References had already been made in the course of the Debate to a speech recently delivered by the Prussian Minister of Agriculture and Commerce. He had read the speech and he was particularly struck by one passage. He said that the depression in agriculture and trade was not to be cured so much by heroic remedies as by attention to small remedies; by public individuals, and associations or public bodies, taking in hand the various industries of the country, seeing how they could be developed, and if they were languishing how they could be revived. There was one farming industry in which he was extremely interested, not pecuniarily, but because it was associated with his county—Herefordshire, the county from which he came, was the county of orchards. Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, Somersetshire, and Devon contained 25 per cent. of the orcharding of England, and 54 per cent. of the total orcharding of the United Kingdom. The greater portion of those orchards consisted of vintage fruit for making perry and cider. There was not at present a large demand for these liquors; but an association with which he had the honour of being connected, were endeavouring to promote such a demand with some considerable degree of success. The profits of this industry had not lately been very great, but the revenue derived from it in past years was considerable. About one hundred years ago an Irish gentleman who desired to benefit his country by promoting its industries, came over to Hereford, as the representative of the Royal Agricultural Society of Ireland, to see how the English orchards were managed. In his report, this gentleman stated that such was the glut of fruit, that a great deal of it was allowed to rot on the ground, because the farmers had not sufficient barrels to place the liquor in, and that cider sold in the district at ten guineas the hogshead. That was much better than wheat growing, and many farmers to-day would consider themselves well paid if they only got half that sum for their cider. The two chief reasons why there was no great demand at present for perry and cider, were that the farmers had to a great extent neglected the industry, and that the trade had got into the hands of middlemen, who had depreciated the quality of the liquors by adulteration. There was no doubt that there were many people who would take the liquors if they could get them pure and genuine and a regular supply of them. But it was not only the adulteration; the orchards also were not now in the state they were a hundred years ago. A celebrated horticulturist named Dr. Beale, who lived in Hereford in the Fifteenth Century, had written a book in which he stated that the orchards of the county were the pattern of England. If Dr. Beale were to rise from his grave he would not be able to-day to make such a statement. It was necessary therefore that the orchard should be renovated. With regard to adulteration—the other reason for the decay of the industry,—he would point out that it was an expensive process to detect adulteration. Even if the Adulteration Acts applied, they must first prove that adulteration existed, before they could proceed, and they could only do that by chemical analysis, which was an expensive process. He recently sent some perry to London for analysis, and though the analysis was not very exhaustive it cost him thirty shillings. He inquired of the Agricultural Society at Cirencester, whether they could undertake such analysis; but they said they had no endowments and could not afford it. Well, the Government had a laboratory, and why should not associations such as the one with which he had the honour of being connected, be permitted to send liquors to see if they were adulterated, and if so, how they were adulterated. The association would in that way be able to tell the public where they could get good cider and good perry, and thereby create a demand for those liquors. Again, why should not the Board of Agriculture or the County Council establish schools for teaching the scientific cultivation of fruit trees. In that way the farmers could be helped in the renovation of their orchards. In the book written in the middle of the Fifteenth Century, to which he had referred, it was said that in every village of Hereford there were numbers of men who could teach the grafting and pruning of trees, but to-day they might go from village to village in the county without finding one man even with that knowledge. Why, then, should not the County Council acquire land for the teaching of the art of fruit cultivation? As to renovating orchards, in Tasmania a Law had been passed establishing District Boards, whose duty it was to go round the districts at certain periods of the year, and see that the orchards were properly managed, and that proper precautions were taken against insect pests. If the Colonists could submit to such legislation for the purpose of maintaining a trade which was competing with our own, surely similar legislation would be possible in this country. As to the question of railway rates, commerce was dependent on the railways, and if their rates were reduced to such a point that they could not maintain their rolling stock, producers would be in worse case than before. But he had heard of a gentleman in Newcastle who ordered a 15-gallon cask of cider from Devonshire, and who had to pay 7s. 4d. carriage—probably more than half the cost of the cider. He could have got the cider more cheaply from New York; and, indeed, the cheapest way of sending goods from London to Liverpool was *via* New York. As to speculation in produce affecting prices, he believed that he was the first person to mention "futures" in the House—the subject which had now been taken up by the hon. and gallant Member for Eastbourne. There were a number of persons, it was stated, who speculated in grain and other food products in New York; and that consequently, like jobbers on the Stock Exchange, they made the prices. But, as far as he could see, if they sometimes made the prices low, they must also sometimes make them high; for the business would not go on if the bears always had their way. But where a number of persons were endeavouring to lower prices, the public always assisted them; and where they were endeavouring to raise prices, the public waited for a turn. So that, undoubtedly, in the long run, Mr. Smith's contention was right, and the tendency of these speculations was to lower prices. But, in any case, the price of any commodity, whether raised or lowered, ought not to depend on the speculations of people who had no other object but speculation; and that appeared to be the view entertained by various continental politicians; for in several countries Bills dealing with the subject had been introduced. Therefore the question ought not to be burked. As to the celebrated Royal Commission of which they had heard so much, if the controversies between its members were conducted in the same manner at its sittings as they were in the House of Commons on the previous day, a protracted investigation might be looked for. But those dissensions might be dismissed in the phrase: "*non nostrum inter vos tantas componere lites.*" Mr. Smith alleged that his views were succinctly laid before the Commission in a printed statement, which was taken as read, and that he was cross-examined quite independently of it. Moreover, he alleged that he was promised that his statement should be printed in the proceedings of the Commission, and that it had been deliberately excluded. If that were so, Mr. Smith had a distinct grievance. For himself, he had nothing to complain of in the present Minister for Agriculture, but, on the contrary, much to admire. When he formed the Cider Makers' Association he wrote to the right hon. Gentleman, and received a sympathetic reply; and at the dinner of the Farmers' Club the right hon. Gentleman had called attention to the cider industry, and suggested that it had not been sufficiently developed. He hoped that before the debate concluded, the right hon. Gentleman would say what the Board of Agriculture proposed to do, and whether they would take notice of the suggestions which had been made to them with regard to this industry.

MR. CALEB WRIGHT (Lancashire, S.W., Leigh) said that the statement which had been made that there was great depression in the cotton trade of Lancashire was undeniably untrue. He certainly knew of a number of mills in Lancashire which were working short time, and of others which were stopped, but they were a small proportion of the whole. And why were they working short time or stopping? It was because they were old mills, with old machinery, and totally unfit to compete with modern plant. That was why they could not make a profit now, and they could not have made a profit in the most prosperous times of the cotton trade—the years 1873 to 1876. He found that, notwithstanding what was said, the increase in the Lancashire cotton trade had been enormous. Our exports to all countries, especially to silver countries, had been greatly increasing year by year, and the wages of the workers in the cotton mills had nearly doubled from what they were, and the purchasing power of those wages had nearly doubled. This showed that our cotton trade would not die. With modern mills, modern machinery, good management, and workmen such as we had now, we should be able to stand against any country in the world. He remembered the time when there really was a very great depression in Lancashire, in the cotton trade and in others, and that was when the price of corn was 84s. a quarter. The average wages of the agricultural labourers at that time were 9s. a week, and the wages earned in the mill for 72 hours were about half of what they were now. The increase of national wealth in this country during the last 30 years, he believed, had been greater than in any other like period in history. We had so much money now that we did not know what to do with it. Did anyone who remembered the great depression of 1838–42 know of landed proprietors of this country showing sympathy with the agricultural labourers by advocating a change which might increase their wages from 9s. a week? He never heard of them doing anything of the kind. He was certain that no hon. Members present had heard of such a course being taken. The working classes of the country would now have a larger proportion of the results of labour than they had ever enjoyed in the past; and he believed that the diffusion of such a principle would contribute to a higher enjoyment of life among the workers of the country.

MAJOR F. C. RASCH (Essex, S.E.) said, that during last Session hon. Members had enjoyed one or two opportunities of expressing their feelings on the subject of Agriculture, and he did not forget that the House permitted him to move the adjournment in order to call attention to it. He wished now to say a few words with reference to what had been said by the right hon. Member for the Isle of Thanet (Mr. James Lowther) who had spoken with the courage of his convictions. He did not agree, however, with his right hon. Friend in advocating Protection. When the artisans of the north called for, as they did now, a duty on imported manufactured goods, and when the labourers who had allotments and small holdings also wished to protect what they grew themselves, and when those two bodies joined their forces together, it seemed to him that as far as Free Trade was concerned the deluge would have come. He was surprised to see that Free Traders had placed an import duty on manufactured goods entering India. Agricultural distress was now considerably more acute, especially in Essex, than at this time last year, and there was an utter inability on the part of the Government to grasp the situation. Prices were now 25 per cent. lower; there were more labourers out of employment; there were more cottages to let, more farmers were being ruined, and more of the rural population were flocking into the towns to swamp the already congested labour market. He represented a district of Essex where the agricultural depression was most frightfully acute. What had the Government done during the last six months on behalf of Agriculture? As a rule they had given agriculturists platonic assurances of regret at the trouble they were in, and promises to do all they could to help the farmers and landowners. He was surprised also to see that in the last week of December the Chancellor of the Exchequer declined to receive a deputation from the Central Chamber of Commerce on the question of local taxation. He confessed that he was sorry to see this refusal, and the same feeling of regret was shared by many of his constituents. He did not mean to say that the right hon. Gentleman was hostile to the agricultural interest, but undoubtedly the right hon. Gentleman had that disinterested aversion for the parson, the squire, and the landlord, which might lead some to believe that this was possibly the reason for the refusal.

SIR W. HARCOURT: The hon. Member is under a misapprehension. I could not deal with the question of local taxation, because it was a question of finance upon which I could not express myself freely in prospect of the Budget.

MAJOR RASCH said, that no doubt the right hon. Gentleman was correct; but no Minister was better able to receive a deputation and to tell them so little than he. Then there was the Minister for Agriculture. He admitted that the right hon. Gentleman had done a great deal for the agricultural interest in the Fertilising and Feeding Stuffs Bill, in applying the Merchandise Marks Act to agricultural produce, and in shutting our ports against the introduction of pleuro-pneumonia from abroad. It surprised him not a little, however, to hear the right hon. Gentleman at a farmers' dinner in December, when those present expected to receive some words of consolation and advice, tell agriculturists that they should study botany and cultivate a super-excellence of domestic produce. The right hon. Gentleman might as well have told them to study Greek Plays. The President of the Local Government Board was in Essex last Autumn, and he gave agriculturists there some advice with reference to assessments which they had not been able to follow. Their idea, however, was that the right hon. Gentleman came down rather to prepare a counterblast to the report of Mr. Hunter Pringle, which advised the Government to do something when they intended to do nothing at all. Next, there was the Conference called by the President of the Board of Trade who indicated that agriculturists were going to get light railways, but that the Government were not going to help Agriculture to pay for them. The principal suggestion made for the possible alleviation of agricultural distress, therefore, was that the Board of Trade might make light railways, but agriculturists must pay for them out of their own pockets. The hon. Member for East Northamptonshire (Mr. Channing) suggested that rents had not been lowered in sufficient time. In Essex rents had fallen to nothing as compared with 20 years ago. The hon. Member also made the suggestion that the Government should lend £10,000,000 or £12,000,000 to the agricultural interest. But if he were the Chancellor of the Exchequer he should think twice before lending the money in Essex. Then there was the proposal of the hon. Member for the Woodbridge Division of Suffolk (Mr. Everett) whose views generally had a certain amount of saneness about them. His hon. Friend appeared to think that if they called a shilling eighteenpence, then they would relieve agricultural distress. The hon. Member for South Leicestershire (Mr. Logan) said that the value of land had gone up three times its value since the beginning of the century. He was best acquainted with the value of land in Essex, and of it he said that its value was absolutely *nil* at the present time. He suggested on the other hand one or two alleviations which might be adopted. The first was the differential and preferential rates under which Agriculture was being crushed at present. He had a Schedule of the London and South Western Railway from Southampton to London in which the home producer was charged 18s. as against 6s. per ton for the foreigner. This was the way in which this Railway had managed to raise its shares to cent. per cent., and to pay the highest dividend in the course of the last 50 years. Last Session he called the attention of the President of the Board of Trade to the overcharges of the London and South Western Railway, but the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Mundella) replied that he had only advisory powers. What was the use of the President of the Board of Trade, or of any Government Department which only possessed such powers? Why could not the Government bring in an amended Railway Rates Bill to stop railways from treating British agriculturists in this way? As to local taxation he said that he could not accept the figures of the hon. Member for North Somerset (Mr. Warner) or of the Secretary for India. The farmer was now paying 80 per cent. of his income in tithe, rates, and taxes; the professional man in the towns was paying something like 6 per cent. only; and that was the real answer to the difficulty. Tithe was another question. He was a supporter of the Church, and he let a farm for nothing at all, paying the whole of the tithe, land tax and property tax himself. He did not object to pay the tithe, though there were a great many persons who did; but tithe was never intended to take the whole of the rent. This was a subject which might fitly be considered in the direction of redemption. A suggestion had been made that the Unemployed should be engaged in re-afforesting the land, but seeing that they had plenty of timber coming in he did not see the advantage of that idea. The Member for the University of Cambridge suggested the putting of some of the Unemployed on the Essex lands, but he could not conceive any man of ordinary common sense putting broken-down cabinetmakers, carpenters and wheelwrights on half-a-dozen acres of Essex clay. He should like to put the Member for Cambridge University on a piece of Essex clay, and then go in a few months and see how he looked. Taking into account the frightfully acute distress in the district, he felt it his duty to speak on the subject.

Mr. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough) did not think it was fair to blame the Government for the agricultural distress, or for the present state of the Unemployed. He hoped the Unemployed difficulty was merely temporary, but agricultural depression, he was sorry to say, was almost permanent. His difficulty was this—this subject was brought forward as a Vote of Censure on the Government, with the view of turning the Government out. They had only been in office two or three years, and these questions had been before them all for a great many years. He therefore asked himself who was to blame. If there was any blame attachable to anyone it was to the late Government. He wanted to know what they did for agricultural depression during the six years they were in office? So far as he knew they did nothing at all. They did something perhaps for the landlords, but nothing for the farmers and labourers, and then when they were out of office they blamed the present Government if anything went wrong. He should like to know if the hon. and gallant Member had voted against the late Government on Railway Rates, of which he now complained?

Major F. C. RASCH said he voted against the late Government frequently on the subject.

*Mr. A. C. MORTON said it was all very well for one or two or half-a-dozen to vote against the late Government when they knew there was no danger of any harm coming to the Government. He did not think the Government was doing all it might do with regard to Railway Rates. The Government had power to prosecute the railways on behalf of the traders and the public, and he should like to know why they did not do that. He hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would not object to find the money to compel the railway companies to do what was right in the agricultural interest. The farmer had to fight, not a railway company, but a combination of railway companies, and to ask a poor farmer to fight such a combination was an absurdity. With regard to Light Railways England was, he said it with every respect to their Irish friends, as much entitled to them as Ireland. He thought the Government ought to lend money at a low rate of interest to the counties, and the County Authorities should be responsible for repayment. His own opinion was that they should not get rid of the land question until they had done away with the landlord altogether. He did not contemplate taking the landlord's property without paying him for it—that was the fair market value. They ought to have it so arranged that the farmer could deal with the land, free from interference from the landlord, in the best possible manner. If farmers would only combine as the labourers had done, to send to Parliament men who would represent them and do what was right in their interest, they would soon put an end to the land difficulty, but the landlords, wherever they got a chance, would not allow the farmers to manage their land in their own way. It was well known that in many cases the landlord tried to prevent the farmer from selling his hay and straw off the farm to the best advantage, and under such circumstances it was impossible for the farmer to make satisfactory progress. The truth was that the landlords had brought upon themselves most of the mischief of which they complained. He would be willing to pay a fair price for the land and get rid of the landlords altogether, for the mischief would never be remedied until the farmer was left perfectly free to manage the land in a purely commercial way. The questions of afforestation and the reclamation of slob lands might well be considered as a means of relieving the industrial depression, and he would ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer to allow them to be dealt with by the Committee. Fifty years ago a scheme was brought forward by Sir John Rennie for the reclamation of 160,000 acres of land on the Wash, and he showed that the work might have been carried out at a profit and with great benefit to the people of the country. If a similar scheme were undertaken at the present time it would give a large amount of labour to working men. It would be found on inquiry that wherever slob lands had been reclaimed they were let at good rents, and that the tenants upon them were doing well. A very striking instance of this might be found in the case of the reclamation of slob lands on the Forth and on the Tay. On the Forth portions of these lands were let on leases of 19 years, and when, two years ago, the leases ran out the lands, he was informed, were readily relet at rents only 5 per cent. less than those of 19 years ago, notwithstanding the agricultural depression. He had heard that the late Chancellor of the Exchequer had proposed that another loan should be granted to the landlords, but he should strenuously object to anything of the kind. The landlords obtained loans 40 or 50 years ago, and what did they do with them? They borrowed money at a low rate of interest from the Government, and then let it out at a higher rate of interest to their own tenants and made a profit out of the transaction; and when the tenants had paid back all the capital and interest they raised the rents on the improvements made with the borrowed money. Whatever was done to relieve the agricultural depression, they should be careful to see that the tenants, and not the landlords, received the benefit of it. With regard to afforestation, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had stated that he could not see how such a proposal could provide immediate employment; but he was told by those who had a knowledge of the question that a large amount of work might thus be at once provided by clearing and planting the land. Afforestation had been tried in some parts of the country with considerable success. Upwards of £18,000,000 was sent out of the country every year for the purchase of timber, and, if a system of afforestation was properly carried out, much of that money would be saved to the nation. The landlords had suggested that tithes should be abolished as a means of relieving the agricultural distress, but if they were abolished it would not benefit the farmers in the least, for in that case the landlords would at once raise the rents to a corresponding extent. If they were foolish enough to abolish all rates and taxes the farmers would derive no benefit; in fact they would be in a worse position, because they would not only find their rents raised to the amount of the rates and taxes, but would have to pay for doing what was previously done by means of those rates and taxes. He should be happy to give a vote for the benefit of agriculturists, but he could not vote for raising the landlord's rent. The difficulty presented by the question of the unemployed was not easy to overcome. It occurred every year, and instead of considering the matter as they ought to do in a Committee in August, the House did not consider it until this period of the year, when the crisis was acute. Something ought to be done to give workers permanent employment in the winter. Some of the London authorities had tried to do something in the matter. On the 10th of October, 1893, the Poplar Board of Guardians suggested to the London County Council that they should at once consider a scheme such as that of reclaiming the foreshore of the Thames, in order to provide work for the unemployed during the coming winter, the Guardians being of an opinion that work of this nature would provide useful and remunerative employment without entering into competition with other trades, and the London County Council adopted, on the 23rd October 1893, a Report of their General Purposes Committee on the matter as follows:—

> "That considering the benefits which would result from the reclamation of the foreshore of the River Thames in the County of London, the Council urges the Thames Conservancy to consider in what manner such reclamation could be carried out."

If the Government would only give the London County Council and other authorities power to deal with this portion of the unemployed, they would use the power. The Chancellor of the Exchequer would therefore do well to allow the Committee that was to be appointed to consider the question of the reclamation of slob lands, either in the Thames or elsewhere. Royal Commissions he had always regarded as frauds upon the people, and utterly useless. The Royal Commission appointed in 1891 cost the people some £50,000, and no good came of it. Last year there was a Royal Commission on agriculture, and it proved to be a Tory Commission, advocating Protection and measures of that kind. Before these Commissions Radical farmers found it difficult to obtain a hearing. The evidence of a Radical farmer in Lincolnshire had recently been rejected, and also that of a Scotch farmer, a free trader. The complaint was made that a Sub-commissioner in Scotland had refused to take the evidence of Radical farmers, and in some English counties Tory Sub-commissioners had been appointed whose proposals would probably be in favour of Protection and the continuance of existing rents.

SIR W. HARCOURT said, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's, began his speech by referring to the Amendment which is before the House, which, I think, has been rather lost sight of. It is an interesting Amendment; interesting to the Government, because it is aimed at the life of the Government, and interesting also in its genesis and even in its incubation. This Amendment, brought forward by the hon. Gentleman who represents the county in which it is my happiness to live, was brought forward originally as a straightforward agricultural Amendment. It said—

> "This House humbly desires to represent to Your Majesty that the continued depression of the agricultural interest and the heavy burdens upon land call for the immediate reduction of local taxation upon land."

That is a very simple and clear issue on which we might have had a very instructive Debate, but somehow or other—at whose instance I do not know—it was represented to the hon. Member for Sussex that an agricultural Amendment was not at all the thing that was wanted. It must be an Amendment of a totally different character. It was thought that the hon. Member for Hampshire would appear to more advantage if he presented himself to the House in the garb of the Member for West Ham; and so actually, I believe, in the middle of his speech almost, and in the very instant of production, the agricultural Amendment was transformed into an unemployed Amendment, and then by way of variety the textile industries were woven into this great agricultural Amendment. I remember that Mr. Disraeli accused Sir Robert Peel of stealing the clothes of the Whigs while they were bathing. That seems to be the sort of petty larceny which the Unionist Opposition have practised upon the hon. Member for West Ham. This I will say, that on this transformed Amendment by far the most moderate and sensible speech was made by the person who was the subject of that theft; and I must say that, on the unemployed part of this Amendment, those who have borrowed the name have contributed very much less to enlighten the House and the country on the subject than did the hon. Member in that remarkable speech he made the other day. Now we have got an Amendment in this changed form, a net which is to be large enough to include all the fishes, all the loose fishes, that may be found. It is this:—

> "And we humbly represent to Your Majesty that we view with the gravest apprehension the disastrous condition of the agricultural interest, the prolonged depression of the textile and other industries, and the consequent increase in the number of the unemployed; and we humbly express our regret that Your Majesty's Ministers have shown no appreciation of the extreme gravity of the present situation."

I do not know whether the gravity of the present situation means the situation brought about by that Amendment; but, Sir, I should like to ask, because it is a very important question, not for this Government only, but for future Governments:—What is the real pith and meaning of an Amendment of that character? It declares, and it is, unhappily, too true, the deplorable depression of the agricultural interest. Now, whatever may be stated in the heat of Debate, I am perfectly certain that there is not a gentleman opposite who does in his heart believe that I or any of the gentlemen with whom I act on this side of the House, do not feel as deeply as he does that the depression of the agricultural interest is one of the greatest disasters that has befallen or can befall the country. Why should we not share that feeling entirely with gentlemen opposite? Speaking for myself, having lived quite as much amongst the agricultural classes as any, I know how much the interests of every class of the community are bound up in those of one of the greatest industries of the country. Therefore it is imputing to us, not only want of heart, but want of sense, to suppose that we do not share with hon. Gentlemen opposite their feeling of distress at the depression of the agricultural industry. And that, of course, is equally true of the textile and other industries of the country. Hon. Gentlemen opposite ought not to impute to us that we do not feel as strongly as they do, or any other man in this House or out of it, the terrible condition of suffering which we know at this moment is being endured by many thousands of our countrymen. They are not justified in attributing to us such a want of feeling as that. But what is the conclusion to be drawn from the Amendment? Is it that the Government are to blame because they have not prevented, and have not come forward with measures to prevent, the depression in these industries, and have not provided employment for the unemployed? Is that what you mean? You do not mean that? Then, what is the meaning of the Amendment? There have been times in this country when the distress even in the agricultural interest has been as great as it is now. If you read the reports of the condition of the agricultural interest in the years 1834 and 1835 you would find that land in this country had gone out of cultivation a great deal more than it has now, and that the price of wheat was some 30s., which, compared with prices known before that time, was quite as severe upon farmers as the price of wheat now. That condition of things produced such a state of distress that I heard Mr. Henley say in this House that there were thousands of acres out of cultivation because they could not pay the rates, and the rates were higher then than they are now. We—at least, those who have reached my age—remember, too, the terrible sufferings in the Lancashire industries in the days of the Cotton Famine. But when has it been charged against the Government, when has it been proposed to displace the Government, because there was depression in the agricultural interest? Or when has it been proposed to displace the Government, because there was a cotton famine in Lancashire? We can remember how the men of Lancashire refused to have that famine put an end to on the condition that they would range themselves on the side of slavery. Is it really to be held in future, when interests are distressed and labourers are unemployed, that that is to be a responsibility of the Government for which they are to be condemned? If so the whole situation of this country will be marvellously changed. You will then have embraced not merely the language of the hon. Member for West Ham, but you will have embraced his doctrine; because, if the Government are to be responsible for the prosperity of all trades, the Government must be the only trader. Then the Government must undertake all the trades of the country, and these trades must be conducted at the expense of the taxpayer. That is the consequence of the course which you are now taking Let us go to the root of this question. Do you hold the Government responsible for this distress—responsible for bringing forward measures to relieve this distress? Do you hold the Government responsible because there are thousands of men unemployed; and do you claim that the Government should find employment for them? Let us understand —is that the issue?—then we shall know where we are. Is that the new doctrine of the right hon. Member for St. George's, Hanover Square? Hanover Square will find it an expensive doctrine. No, Sir, we have heard language much more worthy than that we heard at the beginning of the Debate to-night from the Leader of the Opposition. I will read a quototion from an interesting discussion in which he engaged with an elector who heckled him; it showed the courage of the right hon. Gentleman. He was asked a question on the subject of the unemployed, and he gave a frank and courageous answer. The question was—" What remedy have you for the unemployed "? We are to be condemned because we have no remedy. [*Opposition cries of* " No, no."]

Sir W. Harcourt.

Let me read what the right. hon. Gentleman said—

> " In a working-class and, I am afraid, a very poor district like that in which I am speaking, at a time when trade is languishing in almost every department, the question of the unemployed is one which will never be met with a gibe or a sneer by any responsible politician. It weighs too heavily upon our hearts for us to throw it lightly aside as a thing of no account; but if you ask me whether anything in the power of the Unionist Party or of any other Party, whether anything within the compass of the wit of man to devise is sufficient to meet the crisis of the want of employment now and again falling heavily on the great masses of the population, I fear we can look forward to no prospect of that kind."

That was an honest answer; it was an answer worthy of the man who has been, and I hope will be again, responsible for the conduct of public affairs. Therefore, let us know where we are. Is the Government to be called to account because disaster and distress exist among various interests, and because there is suffering? Sir, suffering is the lot of man, and no Government in the world can put an end to it. Is the Government to be condemned because they have not proposed measures to prevent distress in various parts of the country? A few days ago a very instructive speech was made by the right hon. Member for West Birmingham. He said there were two unsolved problems of local life in England. They were the Housing of the Poor and the question of the unemployed; and he added—

> "I think that those two questions are very closely connected. What is the the only remedy for the question of the unemployed?"

The right hon. Gentleman apparently knows the only remedy for them. He said—

> "The remedy for the unemployed is to find work for them remunerative in itself and which can be profitably undertaken."

He then said—

> "I do not know of any work which answers to this description unless it be the work which can be undertaken in every district in London at the same time in sufficient quantities—the work of reconstructing unhealthy areas and rehousing the population."

Then he proceeded to say that this was what has been done in Birmingham, and can be done under the existing law in London. If that is so, if the only true remedy is one which is already available under the existing law, why are the

Government to be condemned because they have no particular remedy, and the only one does not lie within their discretion? As to the distress in the agricultural districts, we sympathize with the sufferers as much as you; but what are we to be condemned for? For not having proposed a remedy for it? We did what we thought was the best thing; we appointed a Commission. The right hon. Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, was very lofty in his contempt for Commissions; why, Sir, the late Government appointed more Commissions than any other Government ever did. They appointed the great Labour Commission. [*Hear, hear.*] Yes, but I do not think the right hon. Gentleman who cheers heard the denunciation by his colleague of the referring of questions of this kind to Commissions. The Agricultural question is not greater than the Labour question; but especially did the right hon. Gentleman condemn the referring to Commissions of questions which the Executive Government ought to deal with. The Hartington Commission was appointed to determine one of the most difficult and one of the most responsible questions that could possibly have to be decided; and that was the reorganization of the British Army, and especially the character of the Commander-in-Chief of that Army. What is the meaning of this condemnation of Commissions? The Agricultural Commission have not sent in a Report. The right hon. Member for Sleaford (Mr. H. Chaplin), said, no doubt with perfect truth, that they had not done so because they did not consider that they had completed their evidence or had time to come to a conclusion upon the important questions they had had under consideration. But the Commission consists of men who certainly are as versed in agricultural questions as the Government. That we do not deny; and if they have not been able to complete the evidence and form an opinion on this question, is the Government to be condemned and displaced because they have not proposed remedial measures which the gentlemen who are considering them have not found themselves able to propose? Do not take that opinion from me. Will you take it from a statesman deservedly respected on both sides of the House—I mean the Duke of Devonshire? He was speaking only the other day on the agricultural question, and what does he say about the Commission? He wished some measure to be brought forward and he said:—

> "I believe that we may shortly expect to receive a Report—or rather I should say Reports—from the Royal Commission, for I am informed, on what I believe to be good authority, that more than one Report will emanate from that Commission. I hope rather than expect that these Reports will contain some valuable suggestions as to the cause of this depression and the remedies which can be applied. At all events, I think it is fortunate the labours of their inquiry are now nearly terminated, and there will be no longer any excuse for delay on the part of the Government or Parliament in offering the most ample opportunities for thorough examination of the causes of the depression which has so long hung over important industries."

The Duke of Devonshire took it for granted that the Government and Parliament could not come to a decision upon the matter until the Commission had reported. Therefore, I say, it was a perfectly reasonable suggestion of mine the other day, contained also in the Speech from the Throne, that any recommendation of remedies must be founded on the Report of the Commission. Now I must say one word on the distress in Lancashire. The House was not so full as it is now when my venerable Friend the Member for the Leigh Division of Lancashire (Mr. Caleb Wright) addressed it. Those who were here experienced great satisfaction. Another man, who, I believe, is of equal age with my right hon. Friend the Member for Midlothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone), came forward to give his experiences of former times and of Lancashire in the "good old days" of high prices. Though I have not reached his age, brought up at school in Lancashire I remember those good old days. They were good old days when the unemployed were marching up and down the streets, and I was in Preston when men were shot down by the soldiery, and great rioting took place. I am speaking of 50 years ago; but if you go back 20 years you will find that at the present time there is more than double the quantity of cotton imported into this country, which has to be manufactured, that the cotton itself is half the price it was then, and that the wages of those who work it up are far higher than 20 years ago. Well, now, there are two things which it is absolutely necessary to distinguish in these matters. We may talk of distress in trade. The question is, Do you mean the prices at which the goods are sold or the volume of trade? Now a fall in prices very much affects the profits of the capitalist, no doubt, but the thing in which the labourer is interested is the volume of trade. If you have so many more millions of pounds of cotton imported and worked up, you must have so many more thousands of men employed, and it is a fact that the volume of trade has not diminished. What has happened in the last 20 years has been this—that the labourer who works up the material gets a far larger share of the profits than in former days, and no doubt that is a gain to him, but a loss to the third partner, who gets a smaller share. Now, it is said things are getting worse every day. I hold in my hand the figures for the year 1893-4. Well, the quantity of raw cotton imported in 1893 was 12,600,000 cwts.; in 1894 it was 15,965,000. The imports of raw wool in 1893 were 672,000,000, and in 1894 699,000,000. In 1893 the exports of cotton yarn were 206,000,000 lbs., in 1894, 236,000,000 lbs., and the exports of cotton manufactures in 1893 were 57,700,000 and in 1894, 57,000,000. So in both cases the values were larger; but if you take the quantities of material they were immensely larger. The quantity of material is the real test of employment. When we are told about the causes of this great depression we may look at the statistical abstract, and we shall find that year by year more looms and more spindles are at work and more people are employed. Therefore the result, as far as I can gather, is this—that, although capital is yielding less profit, the people have not had less employment or less wages. Now I will go back to the question of agricultural depression. It is true that we have not had the Report of the Commission upon the subject, but we have had what I may call, I hope without disrespect, a desultory discussion with regard to it, in the course of which we have had not very unanimous opinions from hon. Members who represent the agricultural interest. I always hear with satisfaction the speeches of the hon. and gallant Member for Essex, because he is always most frank, and because he always says what is very much to the purpose. But half of his speech was devoted to disposing of the various remedies which have been proposed by hon. Members who sit on the other side of the House. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford thinks that I do not speak respectfully enough of a certain subject which I will not name, but if he had heard the hon. and gallant Member for Essex's description of this particular remedy—that of taking a shilling and calling it eighteenpence—he would certainly have been astonished. But I will go on to what I may call the more serious part of the speech of the right hon. Member for Sleaford, whom we always recognise as one of the highest authorities with regard to the Agricultural interest. What does he say? He attributes the depressed state of agriculture to falling prices, especially the fall in the price of wheat. The right hon. Member for St. George's also says that the fall in the price of wheat has been most disastrous, and that we must do something to raise the price of wheat; we must keep up our reserves. Why, I am old enough to remember the old Protectionists' speeches, and I accuse the right hon. Gentleman of being a plagiarist of those speeches. He has taken up the points in those speeches, and has worked up all the old fallacies of Protection; in fact, this evening he has preached the pure, unadulterated doctrine of Protection, although not with the frankness of the right hon. Member for the Isle of Thanet. I am bound to say that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford desires to raise the prices of everything

Mr. H. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): Only to arrest a fall.

Sir W. HARCOURT: Then the right hon. Gentleman is willing to compromise for wheat at 20s. a quarter. But he has not told us what the ratio of the prices of other commodities is to be. Well, we know now where we are. He touched with a light hand upon other remedies. He referred to local taxation. Well, that was a very good subject until it was captured by the hon. Member for West Ham, whose original Amendment was not discussed. But we have had a distinct revelation to-night upon the subject of local taxation. I innocently said the other day: "Yes, it is all very well to take local taxation off the people who now pay it, only whom are you going to put it upon?" That appeared to me to be a rather pertinent inquiry, because a great many people will have to say something on that subject, and we have really had some extraordinary light thrown upon the subject to-night. I sat by and I heard the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's with profound interest. I felt myself rather in the position of the moribund King Henry IV. when he caught young Henry Hotspur with his crown upon his head. He played the part to life—Hotspur all over. The right hon. Gentleman pronounced a glowing eulogium upon his past finance. I do not propose to follow his example in that respect. I bear in mind the old proverb that panegyrics of that kind are no commendation. But what I confess was more amusing to me was, that he told us that he was ready immediately to take the finances of the country into his hands again. The right hon. Gentleman has already anticipated the result of the Division we are about to take to-night, and I confess that I heard him say so with internal satisfaction, because I felt that I should be relieved from a rather laborious life, and that I should have an easier time of it; and that I should have from the right hon. Gentleman a clear exposition of the Budget he is going to bring forward. I am sorry to see that his soreness over the last Budget has not entirely disappeared—the wound seems to rankle as much as ever. Whatever they may say here, they do not find it expedient to say it in a public audience. For my part I shall not pronounce an eulogium upon myself, following the example of the right hon. Gentleman. It is quite enough for me that the plan I had the honour of submitting was sanctioned by this House, and, as far as I know, has been approved of by the nation. But the most remarkable part of his speech, when the right hon. Gentleman expounded to us the outlines of his coming Budget, was his dealing with the question of local taxation. It was a very interesting argument indeed, but I observed that it was not addressed to us. He said: "I must warn my friends behind me," and he warned them what they were not to expect about local taxation. He said: "I introduced a most admirable plan," but that was a plan that, in order to relieve rates to the amount of 6d. cost the people £4,000,000; and then, with that magical arithmetical power which he possesses, he said that if a reduction of rate of 6d. cost £4,000,000, a reduction of rate of 1s. would cost £8,000,000. "That," he said, "my friends, is impossible." Now that is a very interesting light upon the subject of local taxation. He even went further, and said that if there was a reduction of rate of 2s. he could hardly make the calculation of the cost. But, as to the right hon. Gentleman's great plan, I have always been under the impression, and freely expressed it, that no greater financial blunder was ever committed than to purchase so small an advantage at the cost of £4,000,000 of Imperial taxation. In my belief £4,000,000 of Imperial taxation might have been employed for the benefit of the very classes it was intended to advantage far better than by giving it in the way it was given. What advantage has it been? It has been pointed out that even a 1s. rate would not be anything like 1s. an acre. But he is not going to repeat the plan. It is not one that will bear repeating, and it has been acknowledged to be a failure. [Mr. GOSCHEN dissented.] The right hon. Gentleman, I know, never acknowledges failure. I will alter the word, therefore, and say that that great success is not to be repeated. That is something gained. Accordingly I look forward to the right hon. Gentleman's next Budget with some satisfaction. But he made the interesting announcement that he is going to reconstruct the whole system of local taxation. I wish him joy. I feel the more confident in the right hon. Gentleman's reconstruction of local taxation, because I remember that he is the author of the celebrated doctrine and the famous phrase that "hereditary rates are no burden upon the land." Therefore, the Party opposite are to have no more subsidies, and they are to have the system of local taxation reconstructed on the old principle that an hereditary rate is no burden upon the land. Then the right hon. Gentleman comes forward and tells us: "You are the Party who are always for increasing the rates. You are always against anything that tends to lower the rates. You are the enemies of the Voluntary schools." Ah, he ought to remember his Birmingham allies! He ought to have some tenderness for that quarter. Aye, and he ought to have a little regard for his former self! Because one of the greatest leaders in the movement against Voluntary Schools was the present Member for St. George's, Hanover Square. Here is a sentence of his—I daresay he has forgotten it—

> "He believed that, in the long run, public feeling would declare itself against the compulsory attendance of children at denominational schools, and the support of such schools by public money,"

and, referring to the Bill brought in by the Conservative Government with that object, he said that—

> "personally, if a division were challenged, he had no option but to vote against the Bill."

He was followed in the Debate by Mr. Forster, who was compelled to remonstrate with him upon his ultra-Radical tendencies.

Mr. GOSCHEN: What date?

Sir W. HARCOURT: It was the Bill of the Tory Government in 1876. I will give him the exact date.

Mr. GOSCHEN: No, no.

Sir W. HARCOURT: The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford referred to the Agricultural Holdings Act, and expressed his willingness to amend that Act. I hope, therefore, that he, as well as I, will be able to support the Bill of my hon. Friend the Member for East Northamptonshire.

Mr. CHAPLIN: I have never seen it yet.

Sir W. HARCOURT: Then he had a special remedy of his own. He does not go the whole animal, but he has what he admits to be a bit—he says it is a very little bit—of Protection of his own. He wants to have a duty on foreign barley. He confesses that is sheer Protection. Does he believe that it is possible to protect one grain alone?

Mr. CHAPLIN: It depends on you.

Sir W. HARCOURT: Well, if it depends on me, the matter is settled at once. Well, Sir, the right hon. Gentleman treated all these things as minor remedies, and he told us there was only one true remedy. We all felt what was coming. It was like the onion:

> "—— in the bowl,
> Which, half suspected animates the whole."

He propounded the only real cure for agricultural distress. It fell a little flat, and it was a little interrupted by the intervention of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Thanet. I venture to say that, in any assembly of agriculturists, the Member for Thanet will have 10 to 1 of the votes in favour of his remedy as against the remedy proposed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford. He knows that perfectly well. What is the obstacle, then, to the remedy proposed by the Member for Sleaford? He says it is my obstinacy. I was flattered at his attributing to me that I alone resisted the universal desire of Europe to adopt bimetallism. But, Sir, there was something more than my obstinacy which stood in the way of our proposing that as a remedy for agricultural distress, and that was the majority of 80 in the House of Commons the year before last against bimetallism. If my obstinacy could command a majority of 80, I can tell the right hon. Member for Sleaford that I would cultivate that virtue to the highest extent. But, Sir, is the House of Commons going to condemn the Government because they have not brought forward bimetallism as a remedy for Agricultural distress? Is the House of Commons going to condemn us because we have not proposed protection as a cure? I am almost ashamed to refer to a matter incidentally mentioned by the right hon. Gentleman. He made a statement of what was taking place in foreign countries which I am bound to contradict. He said that the Minister of Prussia was anxious to adopt bimetallism, and that but for England it would be adopted at once. There is no foundation for that statement. I have no doubt that the right hon. Gentleman states what he thought was accurate, but I take care to verify these things, and I have been supplied with what the Minister for Prussia did say. This is it:—

> "So far as the silver question is concerned the question whether it is not possible to raise the price of silver is worthy of consideration, but the most zealous bimetallist will admit that Germany alone can do nothing in this matter, and so long as we are unable to compel other countries" (not England alone) "concerned to combine in this matter it would be advisable that the question should not be paraded in a manner which has unfortunately been the case even in the smallest society."

We must all of us have suffered from this complaint in the smallest society, and we may devoutly hope that the advice of the Prussian Minister will be taken even by my right hon. Friend. But I am at issue with the right hon. Gentleman, not upon the theoretical question of bimetallism—I am at issue with him on a far greater question, and that is the object at which he aims. The avowed object at which he aims is to raise prices. I do not want to raise prices. In my opinion the cheapness of commodities has been an infinite blessing to the great mass of the people of this country. It has been an immense addition to their wages, and the attempt to raise upon the people of this country the price of their bread, the price of their clothes, and the price of all the comforts of life by tampering with the currency is, in my opinion, one of the deepest errors into which a politician can possibly fall. We do not desire to create an artificial dearness by manipulating the currency. The low prices that have ruled and still rule no doubt are severely felt in different parts of the community, but to the labouring classes they have been for years, I am happy to think, an infinite blessing. They have added to their wages, they have enabled them to lay by reserves out of which they might make provision for evil times. Just let me give you a figure or two, to go back to what are called the good old times. In 1851 pauperism upon the total population was 4·5 per cent.; it is now 2·4 per cent., or about one-half. Of children under 16 it was then 5; it is now 2·3. From the ages of 16 to 60 it was 1·4; it is now ·5. In old age after 60 it was 21·5; it is now 13·7. If you take the actual figures you will find that pauperism is much less than it was. In 1849 the mean adult pauperism was 13 per 1,000; it has now fallen to 7·7; but it never fell much below that figure until after 1871 when the fall in prices began. [An hon. MEMBER: No, the fall began in 1873.] I am speaking of the period since 1871. I say that from 1849 to 1871 the fall was down to 7·7, but it has now fallen concurrently with the fall in prices to 2·4. I am quoting these figures from a very interesting paper by Mr. Loch, Secretary to the Charity Organisation Society. That, I think, is a very striking fact. Whenever you come to make attempts artificially to raise the prices upon the consumers of this country you will have raised a war of classes such as never existed before. It is about the most dangerous issue you could possibly raise in this country; therefore, Sir, I tell the right hon. Gentleman that it is not a scientific, it is not a theoretical discussion between us, it is a discussion of the object he has in view. The object he has in view is the raising of the prices of these commodities which are at such a figure as now enable the people to lay by; and they happily do lay by to a great extent. This year there is an enormous increase in the amount of deposits in the Post Office Savings Bank, the small increased facilities we were enabled to give depositors having been largely availed of. Where does the money come from? It comes from good wages and low prices. Then the right hon. Gentleman, the Member for St. George's, turned up his nose at this Committee we are to appoint. Why should we not appoint a Committee? The Commission on Labour referring to this very subject of the unemployed, said that it was a matter which required further investigation. Do you think that we can enter upon a subject of that kind without some full inquiry? If we had proposed a measure upon the subject from a Party point of view, we should not have had half the success that we hope to have from some scheme at which a Committee representing all sections and portions of this House may, I hope, arrive, at all events for the temporary relief of the distressed classes, and, it may be also, some system of dealing with the matter in the future. Surely it is far better, if we can, to collect upon this subject an impartial opinion gathered from every portion of this House. Now, Sir, that is the object with which we have suggested the Committee to the House; in my opinion it is far too great, far too dangerous, and far too important a matter to be made a Party question. The hon. Member for West Ham appealed to the House not to make it a Party question; but did you not make it a Party question when you deliberately introduced it into a Motion, the object of which was to displace the Government? You deliberately used the miseries of the unemployed because you thought it would help you in your Party objects, and that is the secret of the manufacture of this Amendment. Sir, with reference to this Amendment I say, as I said at the beginning, that it brings a charge against the Government which has never been brought against a Government before—namely, that it was responsible for the distress in various places, because it had not produced measures by which that distress could be relieved, and therefore ought to be displaced. I do not believe that the majority of the House of Commons will take that view of this question; if they do, future Governments will be short-lived enough. Are you, who expect so soon to fill these seats, ready to assent to the proposition that whenever there is distress you are to be displaced because you have not removed that distress? Sir, there is no Government in the world which has ever been subjected to such a responsibility or which can accept it. Sir, I say that this Amendment is an unjust Amendment, an unfounded Amendment, and the introduction of the unemployed question into it shows the object with which it was framed, an object which, in my belief, will to-night be repudiated by the House of Commons.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): Mr. Speaker, I never heard the right hon. Gentleman, who is a master of jokes, more jocular than he has been to-night. He has kept his own Party, nay, he has kept us, in a continuous roar of laughter for about half of the interesting speech which he has just made to the House. While I admire the wit with which he has enlivened the debate, I confess I was somewhat surprised at the occasion which he had selected for it. He told us in the early part of his speech that he would be indeed an intolerant and foolish critic who should doubt the deep feelings of sorrow with which the Government regarded the present condition of agriculture and manufactures. Very little of that sorrow appeared in his speech to-night. Admirable comedy has been put before us to-night for our amusement, but what will the ruined farmers and the ruined manufacturers to-morrow say when they read his speech? Will they find as much amusement as we have found in the coruscation of wit with which he has enlivened this debate? I should have thought that the Leader of the House of Commons, in dealing with such a question, and having regard to a particular solution proposed for its settlement, might have approached the subject in a somewhat different tone from that which animated him in the lively display which we have all been enjoying for the last hour and a half. ["An hour and a quarter."] For an hour and a quarter. I wish, for my own enjoyment, it had been longer. I think, judging by what we did hear from the right hon. Gentleman, a longer speech would have greatly entertained us during the time we have to spend before the Division; his speech would certainly have been of a much more lively and amusing character than anything I can lay before the House on a subject which, until the right hon. Gentleman spoke, never occurred to me to be a subject of jest or of Parliamentary humour. The right hon. Gentleman began his speech and he ended his speech by a denunciation of my hon. Friend who moved this Amendment, for having introduced into it the word "unemployed." I think it only fair to my hon. Friend to say he consulted me as to the form of his Amendment, and I take the full responsibility for the wording in which it is couched. I say that to have omitted from an Amendment which dealt with the present condition of Agriculture and of trade any mention of the working classes who are thrown out of employment by the present condition of Agriculture and trade would have been to present to the House of Commons a maimed Resolution on which to give an opinion. Why, Sir, did my hon. Friend come before this House, or ever intend to come before this House, as a representative merely of the farmer or owner? Did he come before the House simply as a representative of the capitalist manufacturer? No; everybody knows that if trade is suffering and if Agriculture is depressed, it is not merely the owner of the capital nor the owner of the soil who suffers; nor is it in the long run they who suffer most or most severely, but it is the working classes, who depend upon them for employment, who are thrown out of employment, and whose interest surely should be as dear to this House as that of any of the other classes concerned. The right hon. Gentleman has chosen to confuse my hon. Friend's Amendment with the Amendment standing in the name of the hon. Gentleman the Member for West Ham. I am sorry I did not hear the speech of the hon. Member for West Ham, because, by all accounts, it was a speech, not only of great ability, but of great moderation, upon a most difficult and perplexing question. But the hon. Member for West Ham was dealing in his Amendment with such remedies as he desires to see directly applied in the shape of State or Municipal employment of persons actually out of work at the present time. My hon. Friend introduced the words which have caused the right hon. Gentleman so much distress, because he felt, as every man in this House must feel, that the great evil incident upon these periods of depression is that they must inevitably end in throwing vast numbers of the working classes out of employment, and in adding them to the number whom the hon. Gentleman the Member for West Ham desires to relieve, but who, at all events, are entirely outside the purview of my hon. Friend's Amendment. It appears to me my hon. Friend would have made a very great mistake had he framed his Amendment intended to deal with the whole industrial system of this country and left out of the purview of that Amendment the class who are, more than any other class, interested in the prosperity of Agriculture and of industry. Before I leave the question of the unemployed I should like to put to the Chancellor of the Exchequer this question. He was good enough to say he entirely agreed with my view expressed at Manchester in answer to a question with regard to the unemployed in the sense of the Member for West Ham. He himself suggested no doubts as to the proper course that ought to be pursued with regard to that class. There was no hesitation in his speech, no suggestion of doubt as to the course which ought to be pursued. Well, but if the right hon. Gentleman has this full and complete knowledge of the whole case, if he agrees with everything I said on the subject at Manchester, if he thinks there is no open question on this point, why does he propose a Committee? A Committee of the House is an important instrument for arriving at the truth where there is some doubt as to the facts of the case, and where the investigation may bring to light circumstances hitherto undiscovered and unknown. But is it not folly for a Government to throw an additional burden upon some of the ablest Members of this House—for to be put on such a Committee they must be the ablest men—when they themselves profess to have complete knowledge of the whole problem and have no doubt as to how that problem should be treated, and are of opinion that anybody who, like the hon. Member for West Ham, suggests that there should be State interference in the matter, is the author of economic and social heresies which ought instantly to be crushed out of existence? Having dealt with the attack on my hon. Friend with regard to the unemployed, I pass to what I venture to think are the material and more important parts of the right hon. Gentleman's speech. The rest of his speech can be divided into two parts, the part which dealt with Lancashire and the part which dealt with Agriculture. According to the right hon. Gentleman, Lancashire never was in a more prosperous condition than it is at the present time. [*Ministerial cries of* "No, no!"] I may have misrepresented the right hon. Gentleman, but, if so, it was done unconsciously and unintentionally. But I understood him to give the House a series of elaborate statements intended to prove that the imports of the raw material of manufacture had been steadily increasing.

Sir W. HARCOURT: What I said was, that trade was increasing.

Mr. BALFOUR: What I understood the right hon. Gentleman to say, so far as the employment of labour was concerned, so far as the consumption of raw material was concerned, so far as the turn-out of British goods was concerned, and so far as the prospects of the cotton industries of Lancashire were concerned——

Sir W. HARCOURT: No, I referred to the volume of trade.

Mr. BALFOUR: So, then, the Government do not concern themselves about the prospects of trade.

Sir W. HARCOURT: That is for the next Government.

Mr. BALFOUR: Yes; and the next Government will concern themselves with it. Now, Sir, I have not had time, as the House will readily understand, to check the figures given by the right hon. Gentleman, to criticise them and to make any complete comments upon them. But I gathered that he framed his view of the present condition of affairs on the speech delivered by the hon. Member for the Leigh Division, who appears to have given the most rosy account of the industries in his district. I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman is going to stand again. I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman is going down to his constituents to explain to them that they were never in a more prosperous condition than at the present time. But if he does, unless I am greatly misinformed as to the condition of affairs in his Division, he will meet with a singular reception when he gives his constituents this piece of most unexpected information. I am told that in Blackburn the number of spindles has diminished by a very good fraction of the total number that were working only a few years ago. I am told that in Oldham —which is the very centre of the textile industry—practically no profits have been made by the great bulk of the Companies in the spindle industry for many years past; and it is perfectly vain to tell us —as the hon. Gentleman did tell us by implication, if not directly by words— that the labouring classes can permanently prosper in a condition in which capital makes no profit whatever. I have no desire that capital should make any undue profit, or any profit greater than that required to increase the amount of capital invested in industrial enterprises. Every one who knows the elements of the question is aware that if capital goes for any appreciable length of time without remuneration it will be gradually withdrawn; or, what is the same thing, will not be replaced as it wears out. The amount of capital will steadily diminish, and with it the amount of work that goes to the labouring classes. It is, therefore, perfect folly for the right hon. Gentleman to engage our attention with one part of the picture leaving out of account another and an equally important part of the picture, and say that employment is going on in some districts while profits are reduced to the vanishing point, or below it. I have myself no personal interest in, and no immediate experience of, the textile industry of Lancashire. But unless every man of business whom I saw during my recent visit to that county is labouring under the greatest delusion, the existing condition and the future prospects of that great, and for that part of England the most important, industry, never were gloomier than at the present time. But I leave Lancashire, thus kindly dealt with by the right hon Gentleman, and I pass to Agriculture, which received even more extraordinary treatment at his hands. The right hon. Gentleman, at intervals throughout his speech, expressed profound sympathy with the failing Agricultural interest. But he told us that the one thing he desired was that prices should continue to fall. I wonder what the farmers and labourers of England will think in the Agricultural districts when they are told that the best wish which a sympathetic Government can form on their behalf is that prices, which have been falling disastrously for the last 20 years, should continue to fall in the future. The colleague of the right hon. Gentleman—the President of the Local Government Board—the head of the Commission at which he and my right hon. friend, the Member for Sleaford, have so pleasant a time, made a speech yesterday upon this subject, and he told us—in conformity with all the evidence brought before him, in conformity with common sense, in conformity with knowledge, and with every fact that even the most careless observer could see—that the root of the whole Agricultural difficulty was the fall in prices. His colleague comes forward and says he wants the fall in prices even to be aggravated. I want to know how these two right hon. Gentlemen are going to hit it off. Which is the labourer's friend, the man who wants prices to rise or the man who wants prices to fall? [*Laughter*, and a remark from Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE.] The right hon. Gentleman says he did not say he wanted prices to rise; and yet he thinks the whole root of the agricultural depression lies in the fact that prices have fallen. And he is the Chairman of a Commission to improve the condition of Agriculture. I do not know who is in a fog; it may be me, or it may be Gentlemen on that Bench; but I confess to being utterly puzzled between the protestations of interest in agricultural prosperity lavished by all the occupants of that Bench when a Division is imminent, and those unfortunate confidences, which escape them in the heat of debate, that the one thing which they are burning for is the one thing which, by the testimony of their own Chief Commissioner, will complete the ruin, already three-parts accomplished, of the industry they love. If the right hon. Gentleman is to pose as a friend of the agricultural interest, then save me from my friends. I do not know what the County Members sitting behind the right hon. Gentleman thought of those utterances. I do not know what the hon. Member for East Northamptonshire, who so lovingly considered the prosperity of every class, including the owners, thought of those utterances. What would he think, if he were in a candid spirit, of spreading through the whole of his constituency and the constituencies of his agricultural colleagues, the fact that the Chancellor of the Exchequer—in the very same breath when he was protesting that no Government which ever existed had more at heart the interests of the agricultural industry—said he desired nothing so much as a further fall in those prices, which, I am sure, the hon. Member for East Northamptonshire has deplored from every platform in his constituency? Sir, the Leader of the House attacks my right hon. Friend with having gone over to the Party of protection. He saw in my right hon. Friend's speech, apparently, some desire to revert to the system which obtained before the Corn Laws. I am not going to discuss protection to-night any more than I am going to discuss bimetallism. But I do wish to ask every man in this House to face the problem in its extremest form before he lays down these easy platitudes about protection. I have never been, and I am not now a Protectionist. I recognise to the full the whole weight and value which every economist has always seen in the arguments for Free Trade. But I want to ask whether we are, in the extremest cases, to consider that these arguments exhaust the whole question. I ask, not with the view of expressing an opinion myself, and not with the view of extorting an opinion now from any Gentleman who hears me, what I hope is a plain question. Supposing, as is theoretically possible, that the result of the existing system of international industry was that the whole land of England was turned out of cultivation, and every agricultural labourer was driven into the manufacturing towns; supposing that the whole country from Land's End to John o'Groats was useless for anything but a gigantic game preserve. That is an extreme case, but it is coming in certain counties. It has come in certain counties already. I hope that what has happened in these counties is not going to spread. I hope, in other words, that the further fall in prices so passionately desired by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, is not going to take place. But it may take place. Under the existing system it is possible that a social and industrial revolution like that which I have adumbrated might overwhelm the rural districts of this country. If so, in my opinion—and I do not shrink from stating it to the public—you would have to take into account other considerations than these purely economic arguments which are the basis of Free Trade; and you would have to weigh in your own minds whether it was possible to have a healthy and prosperous community confined within the walls of your big cities, and engaged solely in manufacturing pursuits. For my own part, I cannot contemplate such a result without dismay amounting to horror; and though I am glad to think that so gigantic a catastrophe has not yet come upon us, I do ask the House to remember that we seem to be within measurable distance of it in certain not impossible contingencies; and if such a possibility is going to come upon us it will strain all our statesmanship in dealing with absolutely novel and unexpected circumstances, and some cherished formulas must be thrown over if we are going to deal with it. I should be very wrong, even if time permitted, to deal with all the subjects that have been raised; but I may conclude by pleading with every Member of the House, irrespective of Party, and of position, as to the facts we have to deal with. We are naturally attached to the system under which we live, be it a system of currency or of general taxation. I do not ask any man to change these except for good cause; but I do express my own most serious belief that we are face to face with a financial, an agricultural, and a commercial crisis which does require us to consider anew and in the light of the best opinions all the circumstances affecting our social condition, and it is only if we are prepared to give ourselves freely to this laborious research that we can hope to arrive at any conclusion which would benefit the great interests which are committed to our charge.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 261; Noes, 273. (Division List No. 1.)

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—*(Mr. J. Redmond).*

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned at a quarter past Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 11th February 1895.

TAXATION OF COSTS BILL.

A Bill relating to the taxation of costs under the Lands Clauses Act was presented by the Lord Chancellor;

Read 1^a; and ordered to be printed. [No. 10.]

LAW OF DISTRESS AMENDMENT ACT (1888) BILL.

A Bill to amend the Law of Distress Amendment Act (1888) was presented by the Lord Chancellor;

Read 1 ; and ordered to be printed. [No. 11.]

THE DISMISSAL OF DR. MOFFETT AND MR. BOURKE.

*LORD **ASHBOURNE** rose to call attention to the dismissal of the President of the Queen's College, Galway, and the Chairman of the Irish Prisons Board; and to move for copy of Order in Council 19, 1890; all correspondence between the Irish Government and the President of the Queen's College, Galway, in reference to his retirement since the date of said Order; letter of the Treasury to Irish Government of December 16, 1891; letters patent granting charter for the Queen's College, at Galway, enrolled November 30, 1863 (omitting statutes, rules, and ordinances appended thereto); all correspondence between the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and the Hon. C. F. Bourke, Chairman of the Irish Prisons Board, since November 1, 1894. The noble and learned Lord said, The dismissal of the President of the Queen's College, Galway, and of Mr. Bourke, Chairman of the Irish Prisons Board, involve considerations of grave importance to all who are interested in high educational questions, and who take an interest in the position and tenure of the whole Civil Service of the country. The first case is that of Mr. Moffett, the President of the Queen's College, Galway, a scholar and man of letters, to whom years have brought no loss of power, whilst they have enlarged and enriched his experience and given him a tact and authority, which make his classes honour him and the institution which he heads, revere him. I do not desire to bring politics into connection with the name of Mr. Moffett, for politics had nothing to do with his appointment. He was appointed President of the Queen's College, Galway, in 1877 (undertaking at the same time to hold and discharge the duties of his Professorship) when the late Duke of Marlborough was Viceroy, and his politics were not those of the Government of the day. He was appointed entirely upon his merits, with the approval of the whole college and of every person who had at heart the true interests of education in Ireland. Since the date mentioned he has fulfilled all his varied duties with singular distinction and success, and thus he won the admiration and love of his pupils, no matter what their religion, politics, or position, and he has brought to the discharge of his duties as President of the Queen's College, a tact and experience which have at once obviated all friction, and largely increased the efficiency of that Institution. Outside the college, too, his modesty, his worth, and his elevation of character have won for him universal esteem. Such a life might well have been permitted to continue its useful career uninterrupted and undisturbed, but on August 13, 1890, an Order in Council was passed at the instance of the Treasury, which, speaking broadly, sought to compel all who are deemed to come within its ambit to retire at the age of 65. The Treasury, as is their wont, tried to apply this in all directions. They endeavoured to apply it to the Law officials both in England and in Ireland, but it was pointed out to them that those officials held under a tenure which was regulated by statute and by Rules of Court that have the force of Statute, and they had to abandon that contention. Then they sought to apply it to the presidents and professors of the Queen's Colleges in Ireland, I think in 1891, and Mr. Moffett and his colleagues in that year pointed out that the Order did not apply to them; that it only applied to those of the Civil Service who were controlled by heads of departments; and that the Queen's Colleges, their government, procedure, and methods were regulated under Act of Parliament and Charter and by Statutes of the Crown. The Irish law officers were consulted, and, after full consideration, they gave an opinion in accordance with the contention of the professors and presidents of the Queen's Colleges. The Treasury practically acquiesced in the construction that was placed upon the Order, and so matters remained until August, 1892, when the present Government came into power. In 1893, on May 31st, Mr. (now Sir) E. Hamilton, the Secretary to the Treasury, gave, before the Committee on Public Accounts, evidence of high importance showing what was then the admitted attitude of the present Government and of the Treasury on this question. Sir E. Hamilton said,—

> "The Irish Government have informed the Treasury that they were distinctly advised by the Law Officers in Ireland in the same direction"—

that is, as the contention of the Queen's Colleges; and, later on, this question was put to him :—

> "The Treasury, I presume, could stop the payment of the salary, subject to the risk of a legal decision? Mr. HAMILTON: Yes; they could exercise that power, but I think they would not exercise it except under legal advice."

That is a very important piece of evidence as showing the considered views of the Government and of the Treasury on the subject. Another year went by, and in April last, Mr. Pinkerton, the Nationalist Member for Galway, directed Sir John Hibbert's attention to the matter in a Question asked in the House of Commens. Sir John Hibbert, who must, in the ordinary course, have conferred with the Irish Government as to what answer he would give, replied as follows :—

> "The Government are as anxious as the hon. Member himself to prevent the presidents and professors of the Queen's Colleges from continuing to hold office after they have become, by age or infirmity, less competent for the performance of their important and responsible duties. The Law Officers of the Crown in Ireland have, however, advised that the presidents and the professors are not within the terms of the Order in Council of August 15th, 1890, and that the retirement of the present holders on the ground of age, or the discontinuance of payment from the Vote in Parliament to which they are entitled, cannot be enforced under the terms of the Order. As regards the future, the Irish Government has undertaken to make it a condition of appointment, in every case, that the holder of the appointment shall retire at the age of 65, with an extension of not more than five years in any case in which the Treasury is satisfied that an earlier retirement would be detrimental to the interests of the Public Service."

Imagine, after that reasonable answer of a most reasonable man, the surprise of the Presidents of the Queen's Colleges to receive a letter, dated October 1st, 1894, from the Castle. That letter states that there had been communication on the subject of the applicability of the Order to the Queen's Colleges between the Treasury and the Irish Government, that the present Law Officers had advised that the Order did apply, and then it proceeded to adduce this extraordinary sentence :—

> "In these circumstances the continuance in office of a president or professor after the age of 65, save as above mentioned, cannot be held to be in accordance with Her Majesty's will and pleasure as expressed in said Order."

It then called upon Mr. Moffett and such of his colleagues as came within the Order to fill in the superannuation form. My Lords, I have said that that is a most extraordinary sentence, containing a most astounding reason. It begs the whole question in controversy. It does not declare the absolute will of the Sovereign of her own volition and for reasons satisfactory to herself that the offices should determine, but it rests for its sole reason upon an inference which depends absolutely for its validity on the very matters not yet determined—that is, whether the College was entitled to be governed, as prescribed by Act of Parliament and Charter, by Royal Statutes, or whether it was to be regulated and controlled by Orders in Council, the suggestion now put forward—a most novel and, may I say, daring claim. On October 29 the President replied again in most dignified, temperate, and becoming language. The letter he had received treated the matter as a brand new question, as if it had never been stirred or agitated before, and quietly asked him to withdraw on a new opinion given by the Law Officers. The President, in his reply, referred to what had already taken place, referred to former Law Officers' opinion, to a new opinion which he enclosed, given by two gentlemen of the very highest position and repute at the Irish Bar, and contended, for the reasons familiar to the Irish Government, that the Order did not apply to him. Nothing happened for three months, and the President might well have thought that on reconsideration the Treasury were satisfied to leave matters as they were. But on January 24 he received from the Castle a letter enclosing him a Queen's letter curtly dismissing him from office, which, I venture to think, was a harsh and a curt proceeding for such a history to such a man. Mr. Moffett had been appointed by a Queen's letter to hold office during Her Majesty's pleasure, a tenure which, by practice and precedent, means that he is to hold office as long as health and efficiency last—not to be wantonly disturbed or to be harshly dismissed. There can be no question about that. A great many high officers in this country, not only connected with education, but in the highest branches of the Public Service, hold office during pleasure, but by practice, tradition, and convenience, and the highest dictates of public policy, it is regarded that that pleasure should only be exercised on real cause, from some demerit, from some incapacity in the person against whom it is levelled, and should not be lightly used by mere revocation of the Sovereign's pleasure, and the Sovereign should not be lightly or hastily dragged into anything which any large section of Her Majesty's subjects can say is harsh, unreasonable, and unjust. The Queen's Colleges were founded in pursuance of the Colleges Act, which was passed in the eighth and ninth years of the Queen's reign. The Galway College was incorporated by Charter, and it has been ruled ever since and is now ruled by Royal Statutes passed in pursuance of that Act of Parliament and Charter. My Lords, these Statutes could be added to at the present moment — nay more, a Statute could be passed prescribing the conditions and terms of retirement, and if it was desired to prescribe an age limit in reference to the colleges, there is the whole machinery prescribed by Statute and Charter to govern these great educational institutions in accordance with the law and the expression of the Sovereign's will. There is a very important Constitutional question involved of grave practical importance to all the Queen's Colleges, and it is a matter of deep concern as regards the necessity for the best government of these most important seats of learning whether they are to be governed by Royal Statutes framed to carry out and develop their interests, and with special reference to their welfare, or by Orders in Council framed on average general principles without any reference whatever to the special needs and requirements of great educational institutions. My Lords, that is a constitutional question of high importance, involving great legal considerations that are well entitled to be examined into before they are lightly to be so set aside. I venture myself to suggest it is obvious that these seats of learning should not be governed by these general Orders in Council. The whole structure of these Orders indicates that they never could be for a moment intended to meet the cases of colleges or universities or seats of learning. Every clause in them has reference to departmental discipline, to heads of departments, office hours, attendance, ranks of clerks, and the idea that the suggestion ever entered into the mind of whoever framed the Order that it was to be applied to great educational institutions, strikes me as a thing that no Judge, at all events, would ever decide, if submitted to his judicial determination. It is said that the Law Officers have now advised. I do not comment upon that, but I say this—that other Law Officers and other most eminent legal authorities have given clear and strong opinion on the other way. But Law Officers can neither make nor declare the Law; that is, the prerogative of the Legislature and of Her Majesty's Courts. The President, always in respectful language, demanded, and, so far as he could, insisted, that the validity of his contention should be submitted, like that of any other subject who was aggrieved, to the decision of the Queen's Courts. The Treasury shrank from that ordeal. The clear and the only meaning of Sir Edward Hamilton's evidence is that they should shrink from it without legal opinion. They never did venture to bring it to the test of legal decision, from which I assume they either got no legal opinion upon it or were afraid to act upon it. The Irish Government shrank from argument; they would not face the Courts, and by the Queen's letter, to which I have referred, they have dismissed a President in the fulness of his powers and in the perfection of his usefulness. This is a grave and a serious case to be justified, having regard to the circumstances which I have ventured to submit to your Lordships. The Government are in this dilemma. If they consider that now, so late in the day, after the three years spent in these vicissitudes of opinion in which they had clearly taken up a strong view—both the late Government in 1891 and the present Government in 1893–4—if they now consider that the Order applies to the President of Queen's College, Galway, in all fairness and justice, why will they not let him test the legality and soundness of the advice on which they are acting? And if the President is not within the Order in Council, and they are only proceeding despotically by the use of Her Majesty's prerogative, then I say that they are taking a course absolutely unprecedented, for which they cannot allege any substantial reason, and which I venture to think, to use a common expression, is without either rhyme or reason. In the year 1891 the late Government, acting after full consideration and yielding to the advice of their Law Officers, acquiesced in the contention, and in 1893–4 the present Government did the same. It is curious how this question came to be stirred up last October. Where was the necessity? There was no urgency, no public need, no college necessity, no scandal, no failure whatever of power or of usefulness on the part of the President in his character of either President or Professor. What can be the conceivable argument for not letting matters alone? No one could then have blamed the Government. They were going on in the even course in which their predecessors had gone, in which their own previous action had committed them. By their own public statements there had been no failure of power, no want of capacity; there was perfect satisfaction in the seat of learning, controlled, guided, and influenced by Mr. Moffett. Why was it that last October they deemed it necessary to move? Were they compelled to stir in this question? What can be the argument? New Law Officers' opinion? But, my Lords, as I have said, there are other strong opinions the other way, and the public statements to which I have referred all go to show that, no matter what the force and weight of the recent opinion may be, there must be grave and serious cause of doubt in this conflict of high important legal opinions. I could understand the Government saying that before they acted on the new opinion they had got they would allow the President to test the matter in a Court of Law. I could understand them saying—

> "We will meet this case by new Queen's Statutes, as we are entitled to do with reference to Queen's College, Galway,"

But I cannot understand the reasonableness of stamping out all argument and advising the Sovereign to terminate this distinguished career by harsh and arbitrary dismissal. The contention, so far as I can gather it on the correspondence, is that, having regard to the contents of the Order in Council, and what it prescribes in reference to public officials and to age, Her Majesty has been advised to act on and have regard to the policy of the Order. But the statement is hardly plausible even on the face of it, because the true analogy for a seat of learning is not a Government Department and a head with a lot of Civil Service clerks — not the contents of an order of doubtful meaning, and whose construction is gravely impeached. The true anology is the practice of all other Universities and Colleges. Let us turn to the Dublin University, a University with which I am so proud to be connected. Take the illustrious Provost of Trinity College, Dr. Salmon, a man of European fame. He is over 70 years of age. Would not the whole literary world laugh you to scorn if you attempted to suggest that you should remove him from his place? Turning to the great University of Oxford, I find that Dr. Sewell, the head of New College, and Dr. Price, the head of Pembroke College, are passed 70; the latter is also the able Professor of Natural Philosophy. We all know that Dean Liddell, who so lately retired from the distinguished position of Dean of Christ Church, is the same age as Mr. Gladstone. We know that Pusey was able to perform with all his power the duties of Professor of Hebrew at the age of 80. We know that Jowett was able to preside over the great intellect of Balliol to advanced years. We know that Froude, the illustrious man so lately removed from us, was almost 70 when he was appointed, and that Sir Henry Acland, full of years and honours, has only just retired from the performance of his great duties at the age, I believe, of little short of 80. Cambridge presents the same position. I believe, without going into details, there are nine heads of houses who are over 65, while two of them may be fairly said to be over 70. I ask why was it that this Irish President of an Irish college, this distinguished scholar, is chased from his position by an arbitrary dismissal—which kills argument, which stifles objection, which cannot be answered, and which refuses to follow the analogy of all other seats of learning in this country. I impute no motives. I am willing to rest the case of this distinguished scholar upon eloquent fact, and I hope that even still the Government will recognise the contention made by the President, not on his own behalf, but on behalf of the colleges with which he is connected. The second case to which I have to ask your Lordships' attention involves the construction of the same Order in Council. It raises some different considerations, but considerations that affect the whole Civil Service of the country. Mr. Bourke was appointed in the year 1868 Inspector-General of the Irish Prisons. Ten years later he was appointed Chairman of the Irish Prisons Board. The tenure of his office, like that of many of the great officials in the Civil Service, is during pleasure. He has been about 27 years in office, and he is now 62 years of age. He is in full possession of all his faculties and powers; he is as capable an official now as he was on the day he was appointed; he has a thorough knowledge of his work; he has ample experience of every one of his duties, and he takes the deepest interest in their discharge. The many noble Lords who have filled the great position of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and in whose presence I speak, must know from their experience in administering the duties of that high office the zeal and the knowledge which Mr. Bourke always brought to the discharge of his difficult, responsible, and even unpopular duties. Mr. Bourke was greatly surprised in the month of November last to receive the following letter from Mr. Morley:—

> "Chief Secretary's Office,
> Nov. 5, 1894.
>
> My dear Sir,—By the tenth section of the Order in Council of the 15th day of August, 1890, it is laid down that it shall be competent for the head of any Department to call upon any officer in it to retire at the age of 60 on such pension as by the length of his service he is qualified to receive. I understand that you came within the possible operation of this section two years ago, or, in other words, that you attained the age of 62 a couple of months ago. It is my duty to say—and I say it with reluctance because it may be personally disagreeable to you—that the time has come when it is desirable that you should retire from the General Prisons Board under the section to which I have referred. I have to make this request in what Government conceive to be the interest of the public service. I need not say that I shall be very glad to recommend the Treasury to award you the full pension to which you are entitled by length of service."

A very important paragraph with which to close the letter, becauses it indicates with unmistakable clearness the attitude which Mr. Morley felt bound to assume in reference to the capacity and the services of Mr. Bourke. The tenth section of the Order referred to in that letter, so far as it is necessary to trouble your Lordships with it, is as follows:—

> "It shall be competent for the head of any department to call upon any officer of such department to retire at the age of 60 on such pension as, by the length of his service, he is qualified to receive. Retirement shall be compulsory for every officer on attaining 65 years of age."

Mr. Bourke's reply was very clear and dignified, and no unworthy reply for a public servant in his prominent position to make to the Chief Secretary. He pointed out he was not within the Order; that either he or his Board, of which he was Chairman, was the head of the Department; and that if there were any reasons or precedent that could be urged against his contention he respectfully asked that they might be submitted to him that he might examine them, take counsel on them, and deal with them as he thought right. Mr. Bourke contended that in official correspondence he had always been treated by other Public Departments as the Head of his Department; that it was he who had to arrange for the passing of the Estimates; and that it was he who had to send up superannuation forms which alone legally justified the Treasury in awarding superannuations. Mr. Morley, a man of ability, and, I suppose, carefully advised, felt that his position hardly stood the test of examination and criticism to which it had been subjected, and, accordingly, he took absolutely new ground, and the taking of that new ground condemns and shows the fallacy of his previous contention. He still said Mr. Bourke was not the Head of his Department; but he passes that by, and goes on rapidly to say that he was further advised that he held office during the Lord Lieutenant's pleasure, and that the Lord Lieutenant might determine that pleasure at any time. My Lords, that letter contains a sentence——

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Earl SPENCER): Which letter?

LORD ASHBOURNE: The letter of November 28 1894—the new ground letter. That letter contains this interesting sentence:—

> 'I referred to the Order in Council in the letter which I had the honour to address to you on November 5, not as being itself valid for the determination of the office, but as having guided the exercise of His Excellency's discretion. When His Excellency arrives at the conclusion that the Order would promote the interests of the Public Service by its application in a particular case, it becomes the duty of the Lord Lieutenant to resort to the power which is undoubtedly vested in him."

What does that mean? Does it mean that when the Order in Council has been appealed to unsuccessfully the Lord Lieutenant can be advised to amend his hand and to promptly dismiss the too-successful reasoner, reminding him that his strictly legal tenure is at the pleasure of the Lord Lieutenant? I did not say lightly that this was a question far transcending the importance of Mr. Bourke's own personal feelings. It is a question vitally affecting every Civil Servant who holds by the tenure of pleasure. Mr. Bourke would be false to the traditions of public life and to the higher classes of Civil Servants who hold under this tenure if he had acquiesced without great examination and care in this proceeding. I ask again, What is the meaning—the Constitutional meaning—by practice of precedent, of this tenure "during pleasure"? It does not mean that a public servant so holding can be despotically dismissed on the mere *ipse dixit* of the Minister who advises in the exercise of the pleasure. That would be Americanizing our institutions. If at each time a new Minister comes into office it was desired to put in a new and put out an old official, it is obvious that such a system would strike a grave and serious blow at the continuity of the Civil Service of the country. Every one knows that by tradition, by practice, and by every requirement of public life, the durability of a Civil Service appointment rests not on pleasure in the ordinary sense of the term, but on pleasure to be exercised judicially and constitutionally. In *Tod's Parliamentary Government* it is laid down that—

> "The Crown possesses an absolute legal power to dismiss any of its servants on the advice of responsible Ministers; but it has, nevertheless, been recognised as a rule that persons holding non-political offices under the Crown should only be dismissed for incompetence or misconduct."

That is a reasonable safeguard, and Mr. Bourke, in all his correspondence, has challenged whether any charge whatever could be made against his competence or his conduct, and that challenge has never been taken up. Mr. Bourke asked for an interview with the Lord Lieutenant — whom I should have been glad to see in his place—and in that interview Mr. Bourke conducted himself with a moderation and a restraint such as might be expected from any public officer in the presence of the representative of the Sovereign. When Mr. Bourke asked whether any charge was brought against his conduct, Lord Houghton absolutely refused to go into the subject, but said he would prefer the application of the tenth section rather than to have to advise the dismissal on the ground of the cessation of pleasure. Mr. Bourke, during the correspondence in letter after letter, tried to have his dismissal placed on any distinct ground whatever. If it were placed on the tenth section, which was Mr. Morley's first contention, he then desired to test the applicability of the section in a Court of Law. Nothing could be fairer; a public servant must and should have legal rights. If Mr. Bourke was dismissed on legal grounds, and if he were advised that the legal ground did not apply, surely he was entitled to demand that matter should be investigated, like every wrong to a subject, in a Court of Law. If the dismissal were put on the cessation of pleasure, Mr. Bourke could only submit, but if the two topics were intertwined and mixed up together he could do absolutely nothing; he was just as fettered and hampered as any slave who had his hands tied. In letter after letter, enclosing the highest legal opinion, he tried to have the grounds of objection against him separated, and he pointed out the difficulty which had occurred in Sir Thomas Brady's case, owing to the grounds not having been kept separate. The Master of the Rolls, a most able Judge, decided in that case that Mr. Brady did come within the Order in Council, and that ended the matter so far as he was concerned. Mr. Brady appealed, as was within his right, to the Court of Appeal, and one of the Judges agreed that he did come within the Order in Council; but the other two Judges absolutely refused to go into that topic, because, as they said, it appeared from the correspondence that the Lord Lieutenant had expressed his will that the tenure should cease, they could not consider, and would not consider anything else. I will now read a paragraph from the letter of Mr. Bourke, dated January 16, 1895:—

> "If his Excellency will intimate to me, either directly or indirectly, that he removes or dismisses me from office, but that my removal is conditional on the applicability of the Order in Council in cases such as mine, then I shall have that construction of the Order decided upon in a Court of Law at once. If his Excellency does not do so, then it merely comes to this, that the Crown or his Excellency may call upon any Civil Servant to resign because the Crown or his Excellency is advised some Order in Council applies to offices such as that held by the particular servant, and no opportunity is to be given to have the soundness of the advice tested by the ordinary tribunals. I beg respectfully to say that such a power was never, as I am advised, asserted or exercised before, and that it is unjust and oppressive in my case."

That letter is a fair and temperate statement of the difficulties in which Mr. Bourke was placed. It comes, then, really to this—that the Irish Government refused to stand on the Order under which it was said, in the first instance, Mr. Bourke should go; they would not allow Mr. Bourke to test the soundness of their position in a Court of Law, and they cover their arbitrary action in a power of dismissal that was only intended to apply to cases of either misconduct or incapacity. Mr. Morley must have felt that it was unreasonable and indefensible to deny a public servant the opportunity of testing the soundness of his legal position. Of course, Mr. Morley is a master of language, and he used this curious sentence:—

> "As to the legal rights to which you refer, these will, no doubt, at the proper time, should the occasion arise, receive due consideration from the Law Officers of the Government."

Was there ever a more ridiculous suggestion made than is contained in that sentence? The issue was knit; the contention of each party was set out abundantly in the letters; this was the proper time for action, and it was idle and absurd to suggest that the Law Officers, in what they consider proper time, were to be permitted to get on two tall stools and sit in judgment on their own opinions. Mr. Bourke was the head of his department; under the ordinary application of the rule he should retire at the age of 65; but there is absolutely no precedent in the whole Civil Service of the country where this section has been applied to the head of a department like Mr. Bourke If there is such a precedent, the Government are bound to state it, and until they do I assert boldly that no such precedent exists. No Civil Servant who holds on this tenure of either Royal or Viceregal pleasure will be safe if this treatment of Mr. Bourke is sanctioned. Such prerogative action, such despotic action, is full of peril to the stability of the whole Civil Service, and it is contrary to the whole practice and tradition of our English public life. My Lords, in neither of the cases to which I have asked your attention have I imputed motives. I have endeavoured not to use any language or words exaggerated beyond the bare necessity of adequate description. The cases are, I venture to think, entitled to grave consideration. They are entitled to the anxious attention of all who are interested in higher education and of all who are interested also in the security and protection of the Civil Servants of the Empire.

EARL SPENCER: My Lords, I always feel at some disadvantage in following an able lawyer like the noble and learned Lord who has just sat down, when he produces many opinions of a legal kind. But I feel bound to rise at once to give the answer to the speech of the noble and learned Lord, and I shall not trouble your Lordships at any great length. The noble and learned Lord founds his speech on what he considers to be the peril to the stability of the whole Civil Service by the application of certain rules in the two cases which he has quoted. I will venture to entirely deny that statement. I affirm, whatever you may think of the application of the rules to these cases—a matter which I shall deal with presently—that these rules are of the highest importance to the Public Service, and that they conduce enormously to the efficiency of the Public Service. Now, my Lords, these rules and the Order in Council referred to were made on the very able Report of the Commission which sat on the Civil Service, a Commission that was presided over by Sir Matthew Ridley, a very able Member of Parliament, who belongs to the Party of the noble Marquess opposite. That Commission made several recommendations for the benefit of the efficiency of the Public Service. They recommended, amongst other things, that there should be no exception to the rule of retirement, except in cases of certain scheduled officers; an officer so scheduled, on being asked by the Government to do so, might extend his service for a further period, which was never to exceed five years. They recommended also that at the age of 60 a man might be required to retire by the Head of his Department on such a pension as, by length of service, he was entitled to receive. They also recommended that the rules should be made uniform and applicable to the whole Service, and should be embodied in an Order in Council having statutory effect. I will now call attention to an opinion which, I think, will be respected on the other side. On February 9, 1891, a question was asked in another place in regard to the application of the Order in Council, and the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Goschen, answered it. The first part referred to the question whether the Government should proceed by Order in Council and not by Act of Parliament. With regard to the policy of the Order in Council, the right hon. Gentleman gave the following expression of his opinions:—

> "Civil Servants appointed before the date of the Order in Council were not exempted from the possible retirement at the age of 60 (a recommendation of the Royal Commission), because it was only a formal statement of the existing practice. It is now competent for the Head of a Department to call upon any officer in the Department to retire at the age of 60. Heads of Departments have for years exercised their powers, and in some Departments it is a formally promulgated rule of service."

That is the general policy. I entirely agree with the noble and learned Lord that this rule should not be harshly applied. It should not be applied in what, I think, he called a tyrannical manner. But it must be employed for the good of the Public Service, and having due regard to fair consideration of the persons to whom it is applied. I will now come to the particular cases to which the noble and learned Lord refers. He began with the case of the President of Queen's College, Galway. I entirely join with him in all that he has said as to the good services of Dr. Moffett. He is a distinguished man. He has served with diligence and fidelity, and great efficiency and eminence, in the position in which he is placed. But what is the history of the case? It does not date from last year or the year before. It began, as the noble and learned Lord has said, in the year 1890, when attention was called to the fact that Dr. Moffett was over the age of 65 mentioned in the Order in Council. It was the Treasury which first drew attention to this, and it was the duty of the Treasury to carry out this part of the Order in Council. No doubt the Irish Government communicated with the President of the Galway College, as the noble Lord has said, and the President of the Galway College—in conjunction, I believe, with the Presidents of the Cork and Belfast Colleges—protested against the application of the Order to himself and those gentlemen. The matter was then referred to the Law Officers, and their opinion was that the Order did not apply to them. I am quite ready to admit that. What followed after that? There is an important Committee of the House of Commons whose business it is to look into the application of the Public Funds—the Public Accounts Committee. In the years 1893 and 1894 they repeatedly called the attention of the Treasury to the fact that Dr. Moffett, whom they considered one of the permanent Civil Servants, was not included in the Order, and that he was above the age when he ought to have retired by the Order in Council. The answer which was given by my Friend Sir John Hibbert in the House of Commons was, no doubt, such as that which the noble and learned Lord represented it to be. He then stated that the Law Officers had given their opinion upon the matter, and that they did not consider that the President of the Galway College came under the Order in Council. After that the Public Accounts Committee again called the attention of the Government to the facts connected with the case, and then the Treasury—who always held the view that the President of the Galway College came under the Order—referred the case to the Law Officers again, and obtained their opinion. That opinion was concurred in by the Law Officers in Ireland, and after that the letter to which the noble and learned Lord referred was sent to the President of the Galway College, asking him to make a Return such as they were bound to ask for under the Order in Council. I believe that a considerable time elapsed before the letter saying that the Queen's pleasure had been taken, and that the President of the Galway College must retire. Not only before, but even after that letter was sent, it is, I believe, the opinion of the Legal Advisers of the Government that the Petition of Right, to which reference has been made, might have been presented by the President of the College. It did not rest with Her Majesty's Government to say that the case should go to a Law Court. They were satisfied with the opinion which the Law Officers had given. They were fortified in that opinion by the opinion of the Public Accounts Committee, and it was not, therefore, for them to lay the matter before a superior Court. It was for the President himself and his friends to do that. It is quite open to him to make that application now.

Lord ASHBOURNE: May the President of the College now take the case to the Courts?

Earl SPENCER: So I am instructed. The noble and learned Lord drew an eloquent comparison between the position which this gentleman occupies and that occupied by the Presidents and the heads of Colleges at the University. He named specially a gentleman whom I always feel it a great pleasure to have known—Dr. Salmon, the Head of Trinity College, Dublin. I venture to say that the case of the Presidents and Professors of the Queen's Colleges stands on an entirely different footing from the case of those gentlemen. Are they, or are they not, Civil Servants of the Crown? If they are not, they are not entitled to any superannuation orders. But if they are, then the question as to whether they come under the Order in Council or whether they do not is settled. I understand that Professors and others have already received pensions as Civil Servants; and there is no question that the President of the Galway College is entitled to a pension, and would claim it, when he retires. It is upon that ground chiefly that the Government, with their advisers, believe that the President of the Galway College stands on quite a different footing to those other distinguished men at the other Universities to whom the noble and learned Lord referred. If he is not under the Order in Council, he is not entitled to superannuation; but as he does claim superannuation, he is like all other permanent Civil Servants of the Crown. With regard to the Order in Council, what I understand is this—that it expresses Her Majesty's pleasure as to what should be done in certain circumstances. It does not of itself carry any power of dismissal. It directs the policy which should be carried out by whomsoever is the Head of the Department; and the Head of the Department acts under other powers of dismissal or retirement, if he chooses to put the Order in Council in force. I do not think I need say anything further with regard to the case of Dr. Moffett. Now as to the case of Mr. Bourke. I wish to say at first that it is painful for me to have to speak in any way upon the subject, because Mr. Bourke not only served under me for the eight years during which I held the high post of Lord Lieutenant, but he was also a personal friend of mine. In referring to the case, I hope I shall not say anything which will hurt Mr. Bourke's feelings, as I am sure that that would be the last thing I should desire to do. The noble and learned Lord says that Mr. Bourke does not come under the Order in Council.

Lord ASHBOURNE: Not under Section 10.

Earl SPENCER: I understand that even Mr. Bourke, in his letter, admits that he comes under part of Section 10—namely, that which will require him to retire at the age of 65.

Lord ASHBOURNE : Yes.

Earl SPENCER : Then how can he divide the section and say that one part of it applies to him and the other does not?

Lord ASHBOURNE : Because they are absolutely different.

Earl SPENCER : He contends, I know, that the first part refers to the Heads of Departments, and that the second part does not. I quite accept that. I maintain that the Lord Lieutenant is the Head of the Department, in the sense of that Order in Council, most clearly and distinctly. I believe that that can be found in the judgments which have been given in parallel cases. There is the Act of 1877, which constituted the Prisons Board. Under that Act I maintain that it is most clearly laid down—no one can candidly read that Act and not admit it—that the Lord Lieutenant must be the Head of the Office. I will further quote the Lord Chief Baron, or Lord Justice Fitzgibbon—I forget which—who says that whoever has the power of dismissal must also be the Head of the Office. Every one admits that the Lord Lieutenant has the power of dismissal. What does the Act of 1877 lay down? It not only says that the Lord Lieutenant shall appoint to the Prisons Board, but the fourth Section says—

> "Whenever, from time to time, any vacancy upon the General Prisons Board shall occur by reason of the death, removal, or resignation of any member thereof, or otherwise, the Lord Lieutenant may, by the like warrant, appoint some other fit person to fill such vacancy."

And further—

> "Any act or thing required or authorized to be done by the General Prisons Board may be done by any one or more members of the Board, as the Lord Lieutenant may direct; and the said Board shall, in the exercise of their powers and jurisdiction as under this Act, conform to any directions which may, from time to time, be given them by the Lord Lieutenant."

I maintain that those words absolutely point to the Lord Lieutenant as the person who appoints, who may dismiss, and who has control over the Prisons Board. From that I argue, therefore, that the Lord Lieutenant is the head to which the first part of the Section refers—namely, that part which shows that he may, after 60 years of age, remove an officer in the Civil Service. I believe that, in the opinions which have been given by the distinguished Judges in Ireland, your Lordships will find that the Order in Council refers to the whole of the Heads, and all the Civil Servants who receive a salary above a certain class. Therefore, according to the legal opinions which have been given in Ireland, it is quite clear that Heads of Departments like Mr. Bourke can be removed under the Order in Council by the Lord Lieutenant, who, I maintain, is the head of the offices. Now, the noble and learned Lord referred to the correspondence of my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary. While speaking of correspondence, I will at once say that I think Mr. Charles Bourke in his letters used the most excellent language, and that there is not a word in that correspondence to which any exception can be taken, always differing, of course, from him in the view which he took. The noble Lord says that Mr. Morley in his first letter unsuccessfully appealed to the Order in Council, and subsequently fell back on the power of the Lord Lieutenant to dismiss at pleasure. I maintain that it is perfectly and absolutely clear that the Order in Council of itself did not give any power of dismissal at all. With reference to a similar case, that of Sir Thomas Brady, tried on appeal before the Chief Baron, that Judge stated that—

> "It seems to be admitted on all hands that the Order in Council of August 15, 1890, did not and could not determine the office."

Nothing can be more clear than that expression of opinion. Lord Justice Fitzgibbon concurred in the view that an officer cannot be deprived of his office by the Treasury Minute. My right hon. Friend, no doubt, in the first instance, wrote this letter without referring to the other powers of the Lord Lieutenant, but he did that in order to make the fall, which he knew would be a heavy one, if possible, lighter; and he wished to refer to the indication of Her Majesty's pleasure as directed in the Order in Council rather than to the arbitrary powers which the Lord Lieutenant holds. But, as I have said, the Order in Council of itself is only the indication of Her Majesty's pleasure; the carrying out of that Order must depend on the other powers and upon whoever thinks it good to carry out the Order in Council. I maintain in that case that the Lord Lieutenant is the person at the head of the offices. He in that case pointed out, and desired to carry out, the spirit of the Order in Council, and he did this by the powers which belonged to him. It only remains for me to ask with regard to the discretion which has been used, "Has that discretion been properly used or not? Has it been used harshly?" I maintain this—that there may be in the public service many a man who has worked hard and zealously, and who on that account deserves the thanks of the public; at the same time he may have certain qualities which do not render him a desirable agent when improvements and changes are going to be made in that Department. All I have to say with regard to Mr. Bourke is that, in the opinion of the Irish Government, he was not a person who could well and easily and smoothly carry out certain changes which the Irish Government think necessary in the Prison Service; and therefore, on that account, and on that account alone, the Lord Lieutenant thought it desirable and necessary to carry out the clause of the Order in Council. I do not think it necessary to add anything more to what I have said. I shall conclude by saying that Her Majesty's Government will have no objection to give the Papers for which the noble Lord has moved.

THE MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY thought that no answer had been given by the noble Earl to the charge which had been made by his noble and learned Friend against the action of the Government in dismissing summarily two capable officials—action which was almost of an unjustifiable character. Those two officials owed a debt of gratitude to his noble Friend for the clear and explicit manner in which he had placed before the country the cruel conduct of the Irish Executive with regard to them. He would go further and say that the public servants of the country owed his noble Friend a debt of gratitude in calling attention to the treatment of the two officials, because it was treatment that might be extended to any public servant who at the present moment relied on what was called the pleasure of the Queen as a security for his appointment, and, on the conviction that so long as he discharged his duties to the satisfaction of Her Majesty, he might look upon the tenure of his appointment as a permanency. It was true enough to say that the theory of the public service in this country was based on Her Majesty's pleasure, but the practice was that so long as public servants discharged their duties satisfactorily they knew that they might look upon their position as permanent and free from attack. He could not imagine a more lamentable condition of affairs in connection with public servants than that which existed in America. He trusted that the same methods of changing the Civil Service with the various Administrations would never be adopted in this country. The damage which was inflicted upon the interests of America by an adhesion to this system had been well recognised by the President of the Board of Trade in his able work on the American Constitution, wherein the right hon. Gentleman stated that the system "has lowered the general tone of the public morals." But he asked their Lordships to remember that the public service included other officials besides Civil Servants. There were officers in the Army and Navy, all of whom owed their offices to the pleasure of the Queen. The whole pension and superannuation code showed the permanency of the public service, notwithstanding the technical term of "pleasure." This code also showed that the permanency of the service was recognised by the law. The expenditure of public money for pensions had been made the ground for this, but it was impossible not to recognise that officers had really no claim to the large amount of money annually provided for their retiring pensions if it was conceded that they were really liable to dismissal by the arbitrary act of the Government. His noble Friend, therefore, in defending those two officials was, in reality, defending all public servants, whether Civil, military, or naval. Dealing with the case of Mr. Bourke, he maintained that the Chairman of the Prisons Board was the head of his Department. As such he had been always recognised, and as such he had been invariably addressed by the Treasury. It was illogical to plead the Order in Council as a justification for the dismissal by the Lord Lieutenant. Either the Order in Council held good or it did not. They all knew that it had been decided that it did not hold good—in the first place, because Mr. Bourke was Head of his Department; in the second place, because

Mr. Bourke was only 62 years of age. The statements in Mr. Morley's letter of January 15 were absolutely illogical. The Government ought not to attempt to ride on two horses. They ought to give Mr. Bourke an opportunity of testing the matter in a Court of Law, or they should say they refused to give him that opportunity, because they knew they would be defeated in a Court of Law. They pursued an arbitrary course in dismissing Mr. Bourke without rhyme or reason. The noble Earl referred to the case of Sir Thomas Brady, but Mr. Bourke asked that they should follow the example of Sir Thomas Brady. That case was not a parallel one. Sir T. Brady was 71, and he was accorded the opportunity of testing his claim in a Court of Law. The Executive should give Mr. Bourke the same opportunity as was given to Sir T. Brady by the late Lord Lieutenant. Mr. Bourke put the matter in a nutshell, when he very truly said—

> "If I am to be arbitrarily dismissed the construction of the Order is a matter of indifference, but if not it is a question of vital importance."

He concurred in that statement, and he thought that the right of appeal should be given to Mr. Bourke as it was given to Sir Thomas Brady. Mr. Bourke's dismissal could be defended only on one of three grounds—either he was guilty of misconduct, or he was incapable of discharging his duties, or it was proposed to consolidate various offices. As to the latter he need not say anything, and as to incapacity or misconduct no charge whatever need be made. No charge could be made, or they would not have recommended him for full pension. He thought the action of the Irish Executive was arbitrary, unjust, and absolutely indefensible. Mr. Bourke had effected great improvements in the Irish prisons, and now their sanitary condition compared favourably with prisons in any part of the country, Along with this the expenditure had been reduced to a considerable extent, and therefore Mr. Bourke had a right to be treated with common decency by the Executive. He passed to the case of Dr. Moffett. They had yet to learn from the noble Earl why Dr. Moffett had been dismissed. No reason whatever had been given; and Dr. Moffett was as capable now as he ever was of discharging his duties. Why did not the Irish Executive allow Dr. Moffett to raise the question in a Court of Law? The noble Earl hinted that it was possible for Dr. Moffett to re-open the matter in a Court of Law. How was he told to do that after the Queen's letter? Perhaps the Lord Chancellor would explain that. It seemed to him a very curious thing to find the Law Officers of the present day called in and their opinions quoted directly in opposition to the Law Officers of the last Government. It was like turning the Law Officers into a kind of political agent. As to the question of age, Dr. Moffett was not so advanced in life as the Heads of other Colleges and Universities, including Trinity College. Such a man as Dr. Moffett was a credit to the College, and in giving no valid reason for his dismissal, the Executive had treated Dr. Moffett, if possible, more unjustly than they had treated Mr. Bourke. He could not but think there was something more than met the eye in his dismissal. He had already referred to the opinion held of Dr. Moffett by the Council of Queen's College, Galway. The resolution declaring that they viewed with regret the action of the Government, and considered that considerable damage was done to the interests of the College in removing Dr. Moffett, especially at this time, was carried with only one dissentient—Professor Pye. It had been suggested in the *Independent* that Mr. Pye could not be considered to be an absolutely disinterested person in the matter, but as to that he would say nothing. He might mention that there had been some curious appointments in Ireland recently to posts rendered vacant by the deaths of three valued friends of his own who had been Lords Lieutenant. A learned Professor of Trinity College had said recently in Dublin that when Mr. Morley should leave Office it would be possible to say of him that no man had ever done so much to elevate the Irish people, for he had shown that no Irishman was too unprincipled or too incompetent to hold Her Majesty's Commission of the Peace. Appointments such as these made in succession to Mr. Bourke and Dr. Moffett injured honourable and worthy men. The matter could not rest where it was, and he did not think that this summary dismissal of able public servants could be recognised when the noble Marquess (Lord Salisbury) should return to the Ministerial Bench.

There might be retaliation. He hoped earnestly that when the Unionist Party should return to power the two appointments of successors to Mr. Bourke and Dr. Moffett would be regarded as never having been made. It might be said that a policy of retaliation in these matters would be antagonistic to English views and was only adopted in America. That was true; but if this policy were hereafter adopted in this country it would be due to the action of the present Government, upon whom the responsibility would rest.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL): I cannot help expressing regret at the concluding observations of the noble Marquess. They were beside the case with which we are dealing, which is a case utterly independent of Party or political considerations, and they converted a perfectly fair and proper subject for unimpassioned discussion into a subject of Party attack. I do not deny that this question is one of considerable importance, but it is not such a question as my noble and learned Friend the noble Marquess represents it to be. It is the case of two members of the Civil Service who have been retired on a pension in accordance, as is alleged by the Government, with the law of the land—in other words, in accordance with an Order in Council not made by the present Government, but an Order for which noble Lords on my left are responsible. It is in accordance with the provisions of that Order in Council that the Government have done what they have. My noble and learned Friend alluded to the retirement of Dr. Moffett, and spoke of it as dismissal. But if a Civil Servant of the Crown is dismissed for misconduct, I apprehend that it is not usual that he should retire with a pension. It is not, to use words in their ordinary meaning, to say that an officer who is retired in accordance with this Order in Council has been dismissed from his office, and it would be unfair to the officer to use any such mode of expression. Many Civil Servants have been retired under this Order of the Privy Council, and I should not like to say of any of them that they have been dismissed. We were advised, rightly or wrongly, that the cases to which attention has been drawn to-day come within the Order in Council, and the Government acted upon that advice. My noble and learned Friend has spoken as though this were a new exercise of power by the authorities of the day, but Sir Thomas Brady was retired by the late Government just as Dr. Moffett has been retired now. If Dr. Moffett was "dismissed," Sir Thomas Brady was dismissed also, and Sir Thomas Brady protested just as earnestly as Dr. Moffett that his case did not come within the Order in Council. My noble and learned Friend says that Dr. Moffett had the opinions of high legal authorities in support of his contention that his case ought to be excluded from the Order. Well, so had Sir Thomas Brady, and yet the Government of the day disregarded the legal opinions upon which Sir Thomas Brady relied, and acted upon the advice of their own Law Officers.

LORD ASHBOURNE: They gave Sir Thomas Brady the opportunity of having the queston litigated.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: They gave him no more opportunity than Dr. Moffett has at the present moment. Sir Thomas Brady brought his Petition of Right, and it was heard by the Master of the Rolls in the Court of Appeal, and, if he had the right to Petition, just the same right exists at present. There is no distinction between that case and the present one. My noble and learned Friend (Lord Ashbourne) shakes his head. Well, I have read the decision of the Court of Appeal, and I assert that there is no distinction between the two cases. It is true that there might be a question as to the extent to which the matter could be considered by a Court of Law. I understand that there was a difference of view upon the point among the learned Judges of the Court of Appeal. One of the Judges took the view that it was open to them to dismiss the Order in Council and to consider whether it applied to the particular case, but Chief Baron Pallas and Lord Justice Barry took a different view. But all I say now is this, that Dr. Moffett had precisely the same right to go to the Court of Appeal as Sir Thomas Brady had Therefore, I do not think it is quite fair to speak as though this were a new and unprecedented exercise of power by the present Government. Sir Thomas Brady raised exactly the same point as has been raised in Mr. Bourke's case, for he said—

> "I am Head of my Department and you are, therefore, not entitled to dismiss me; I do not come within the Order."

I quite agree that this policy of retirement at a certain age is not a policy not open to question, and that there is a great deal to be said for it and against it. I am not personally very much enamoured of it; but the question was discussed by a Committee of great weight, and they came to the conclusion that it was a wise and expedient policy, on the ground that, although you may under a system of retirement at the age of 65 or 70 lose some men who still have years of work in them, you get rid, on the other hand, of inefficient men occupying high posts, whose continuance in those posts would be detrimental to the Public Service. Whether this policy be a right or a wrong policy, so long as it exists ought it not to be impartially and inflexibly carried out? If you make exceptions to the application of this policy you do gross injustice to men in whose case it has been rigidly enforced. There is no justification for making such exceptions. The rule must either be vigorously and universally applied, or you must agree upon definite exceptions which shall not depend upon the caprice of the Government of the day. Many a job would be likely to be done if the carrying out of the Order in Council were to depend upon the favour of the authorities. The only safeguard against abuse is its rigorous application. The question then arises whether a given case comes within the Order in Council. I do not think that you will doubt that the question in the cases to which attention has been drawn were advised by their English and Irish Law Advisers.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: And by the former Law Authorities.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: The Government of the day must take the best advice they can get on any given subject. The Government were bound to take the advice of the English Law Officers as well as of the Irish Law Officers, for it would be bad to have different systems administered in Ireland and England respectively under one and the same Order in Council. The Treasury accordingly took the opinion of the English Law Officers, and it was then found desirable to ascertain whether the present Irish Law Officers concurred with the English Law Officers. If they had dissented, and taken the same view as their predecessors, then no doubt the Government would have had to make up their minds as best they could. But the opinion of the present Irish Law Officers did not coincide with that previously given, but was in accordance with the opinion of the English Law Officers. What was the Government to do under those circumstances? I think all of your Lordships who look at this matter candidly will admit that the Government cannot be blamed if, being thus advised both by the English and Irish Law Officers that the case was within the Order in Council, they acted upon those opinions. And that is the whole of Dr. Moffett's case. It may well be that that gentleman could have continued some years longer doing good service, but that is true of many men who have been retired under this Order, and not alone of Dr. Moffett. The only policy to be pursued in these cases is to deal with all alike and to act strictly upon what the Order in Council has provided. This case, of course, differs entirely from that of many English University officials to whom reference has been made. These are not Civil Servants of the Crown at all; the Irish Professors are, and it is as such they become entitled to their pension. If the English University officer was dismissed he would simply cease to hold office, and would not receive one penny of public money, but the Irish Professors receive the public money on their retirement in precisely the same way as any other Civil Servant of the Crown. Before I pass from that I should like to read a comment of the Chief Baron in Sir Thomas Brady's case in the Court of Appeal. He says, first of all, that the Order in Council does not in itself work any dismissal, or removal, or retirement, but that that must be the specific act of the Crown; and then he proceeds:—

> "In my opinion the effect of the Order was to impose a duty on the Lord Lieutenant to institute inquiries into the various offices that were held at his pleasure, to ascertain the ages of persons who held those offices, and to take such advice as he best could as to the purview of this Order in Council, and as to the persons who come within it, and, having ascertained the facts, then to do the thing his Sovereign commanded him to do—that is, to return the offices of those who, in his opinion, were within it."

In this case I say that that duty, and nothing but that duty, has been discharged. Now with reference to the case of Mr. Bourke, the power of calling upon a Civil Servant of the Crown to retire at the age of 60 was no new power introduced by the Order in Council. It existed before, and, my noble and learned Friend to the contrary notwithstanding, it was frequently acted upon both before and after the Ridley Commission. Your Lordships will understand at once why I should have the greatest objections to giving the names of cases, but I can assure your Lordships that there are many cases during many years past in England in which those holding high offices in the Civil Service have at the age of 60 been requested to retire precisely as Mr. Bourke was. Let me read from an answer made by Mr. Goschen in the House of Commons on February 19, 1891, in which he said that Civil Servants—

> "Were not exempt from the possible retirement at the age of 60, because that is only the formal statement of an existing practice. It is now open for the Head of a Department to call upon any officer in that department to retire at the age of 60, and Heads of Departments have for years exercised that power."

The ordinary course, then, has been followed in the present case. My noble and learned Friend says that the Chief Secretary first rested himself on a clause in the Order in Council, then having abandoned that position he rested himself on the prerogative of dismissal. There is a fallacy in all that. If a person is retired under the Order in Council, his office ceases by the pleasure of the Crown. That is the only way in which he ceases to hold office. The Order in Council does not retire him; it merely says the Head of the Department may call upon him to retire. Therefore, it was really no new ground my right hon. Friend relied on; it was the necessary sequel to that which had gone previously—namely, that he had been called upon to retire. It is said that Mr. Bourke was himself the Head of the Department within the meaning of the Order in Council. On that question the advice received has been that he was not, and upon that question I should have no hesitation in expressing my own opinion to the same effect. I understand the Head of a Department to be the authority who has power to control, to order, to dismiss. I apprehend all permanent Civil Servants of the Crown have a Head of their Department, who is responsible to Parliament. I think any other would be a most dangerous doctrine. To suppose that a Civil Servant can say: "I am the Head of my Department; nobody has authority over me; nobody can determine whether I should do this or that, or how long I shall remain in the public service," seems to me an impossible position. You will always find, in the case of every Civil Servant, that the Head of his Department is some one who is responsible to Parliament. And especially having regard to the sections of the Act of Parliament which my noble Friend has read out, how can it be doubted that this official was under the Lord Lieutenant? Can he be said to be the Head of his Department when there is another head, whose orders and directions he is bound to follow? I can entertain no doubt that this gentleman was not the Head of his Department within the meaning of this Order, but that the Lord Lieutenant was. I cannot help saying one word in conclusion, because this question does seem to me to raise serious considerations. It was never a pleasant thing when the Head of a Department is required in terms of an Order in Council to call upon a public servant to retire, but if it was not to be left to the judgment of the Minister or Head of the Department, whoever he might be, if it was to be open to the friends of the officer in Parliament to come forward and say—"You are not justified in doing this action unless you can point out misconduct on his part," why, you would get rid of the effect of the Order in Council altogether, and you would deprive yourself of all the advantage intended to be given by the provision requiring retirement after 60. The very object is, that the Minister, if he act honestly and fairly, according to the best of his judgment in the public interest, ought not to be compelled to come to Parliament and justify by proof of inefficiency or misconduct what he has done. If you insist upon that, you will make the Order in Council a dead letter, and you will seriously intefere with the interests of the public service. I cannot but think that when your Lordships consider the matter you will come to the conclusion that whether the cases be or be not within the Order in Council, the Government are not guilty of any of the base motives which the noble Marquess is pleased to attribute to them, but have simply endeavoured to carry out what they believe to be rules and orders which have been laid down for the guidance of the public service.

EARL COWPER considered this was a matter involving great principles, and particularly the principle of whether the heads of the Queen's Colleges in Ireland were really to be considered in the light of ordinary Civil Servants to whom the rule of retirement at the age of 65 was to apply. As had been well pointed out, some of our most distinguished professors were already far beyond that age, and to make a hard-and-fast rule that at 65 a professor must retire would be to lose the services of most distinguished men when, as regarded their work, they might be said still to be in their prime. As far as the Order went, it was compulsory at 65, but at 60 a retirement might be required for reasons shown, whilst the age might also be extended to 70; therefore, between the ages of 60 and 70 it was entirely at the option of the Lord Lieutenant to get rid of any professor or continue him in office as he chose. In his opinion this left a great opening for jobbery, if any one was inclined to practise it, and it would be far better if the professors in Ireland, as in England, were allowed to remain in each case until the day of death or the good sense of the holder of the office told him it was time to make way for a younger man. Although jobbery might be practically extinct in England, it was not yet quite extinct on the other side of the Channel, and it was all the more necessary, therefore, if possible, to guard against any suspicion whatever. Sometimes the Lord Lieutenant had a difficult duty to perform even in appointing to offices. When he was in Ireland he appointed as Provost of Trinity Dr. Jellett. Dr. Jellett was not a supporter of the then Government, and great pressure was put upon him (Earl Cowper) to appoint other people who were favourable to the Government, but who, in his opinion, were not equally good men for the particular office. He considered such appointments should be practically permanent, so that it should not be possible to remove the holders. Dr. Moffett was not a supporter of the Government, and if his successor should be, what imputations it would expose the Government to. The Debate had conclusively shown that Dr. Moffett was still fitted in every way to discharge his duties; he was not retired for any fault; but simply that the Government might carry out a general principle which, in this particular way, had never been put in practice before. Everybody knew that Dr. Moffett was doing good work and was perfectly competent, and many people would believe that the action of the Government was attributable to political reasons, particularly if it should turn out that his successor were a Home Ruler. If the present law did unfortunately allow the removal of heads of colleges, it ought to be allowed to remain practically a dead letter.

*LORD HALSBURY desired to put plainly before their Lordships what he understood to be the complaint. The complaint was this—Either accuse me of incompetency or misconduct, or, if you say it is the operation of a rule which has been established in the Civil Service, whereas I deny it, let me have some form in which that matter can be tried, not by the arbitrary will of the Government of the day, but of some judicial tribunal. The noble Lord on the Woolsack had expressed a strong opinion as to one part of this case—namely, as to whether Mr. Bourke was Head of the Department or not; but he had designedly avoided treating the question of the competency of the holder of an office, held during the pleasure of the Crown, of trying the question whether or not he was properly dismissed by a Petition of Right. The noble Earl opposite said that course was open to the holder, but the noble Lord on the Woolsack did not echo that proposition, but rather intimated his determination not to express an opinion.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: I said the question had been dealt with by the Irish Court of Appeal. I did not express any definite opinion upon it, but I said if it could be tried in Sir Thomas Brady's case it could be in this, and if it be not on a Petition of Right I know of no method by which it could be tried. This case may yet come up on a Petition of Right, and, unless it is absolutely necessary, I desire to avoid expressing any opinion on a case which may be argued before us.

LORD HALSBURY would have thought that that disinclination to express an opinion in such circumstances would have applied equally well to the point as to whether this gentleman was the Head of a Department, which might also be argued before them, but there was no reticence on the part of the Lord Chancellor on that branch of the subject. He should be under the same reticence himself, but there were some questions which were absolutely unarguable, and to say that a person could bring a petition of right against the Queen in respect to an office held during pleasure was nothing less than ridiculous. There could be no such right. The very form of the appointment and the nature of the tenure rendered it absolutely impossible to allege as against Her Majesty that there was any right. In the litigation by Sir Thomas Brady that very point arose, and all that was now asked was, that, the Government should give them an opportunity of testing whether these regulations under the Orders in Council did or did not apply to such and such offices. If they went before a Court of Law, and proceeded upon a petition of right or anything which lay in the pleasures of the Crown as the determining factor, the Court of Law would at once say they had nothing to do with it. As he understood it, two of the Judges of the Court of Appeal in Ireland had said so, stating that they could not give any opinion because Her Majesty, having dismissed the holder of the office, they could not go behind Her Majesty's pleasure.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: It could not be raised in that case. They did not decide it in that case.

*LORD HALSBURY said, the noble Lord read a passage from the Chief Baron's judgment, which was fatal to the question being determined on a Petition of Rights. It was Her Majesty who dismissed and imposed the duty upon Her officers of carrying out Her determination. He observed a sort of alternative argument. First of all the policy did not apply, but the letter did, and then the letter did and the policy did not. Did any human being suggest that the Ridley Commission entertained the question of Professors, or Heads of Colleges, or persons in that position at all? The language of the Order in Council was conclusive against it. No such phrases would have been used in it if they had been certain that was a question they were entertaining, and if they did entertain it they took no evidence upon it. On the question of policy he could understand a clerk entering the Public Service when young, and ultimately arriving at an age when he was entitled to a retiring pension at certain rates. But at what period of life were professors generally appointed? What sort of professors would there be if they were appointed at an age when they could, according to the Civil Service Regulations, obtain full pensions? As to Mr. Bourke—that gentleman denied that the Order applied to him. He said he was not subordinate to the Head of any Department, but he was himself the Head of his Department. That was his position, and he wanted that question to be tried in some form or other. If the decision went against him, he would be content. What Mr. Bourke asked the Government not to do was to call upon him to resign within the Rule, and, if he tried that question not by the question of the rule, but answer him by saying, "Oh, you only hold during pleasure," that was not fair. Mr. Morley's correspondence did not disclose what course he would take. It was fair if the right hon. Gentleman should say, "Well, I am going to dismiss you, in pursuance of my power as Chief Secretary, advising the Lord Lieutenant," in which case, there was a question of policy, which might come before Parliament; but if the right hon. Gentleman said "I am bound to do it, not because I have any objection to you, not because there is any reason why you should be dismissed from office, but because I am forced by this arbitrary rule, and you are within it and it is improper to make any distinctions," the question would be one upon which a court might give a judicial opinion. Up to the present, however, it was said, "No, I dismiss you; I do not tell you why: that is the determination of pleasure." The Lord Chancellor had given his opinion as to the question whether or not Mr. Bourke was the head of his Department. If he understood his noble Friend's argument there was no head of a Department in this country except Her Majesty. He supposed that the Lord Lieutenant was in the same position in Ireland as Her Majesty was here. He had a strong suspicion that "head of a Department" was not capable of exact definition, but in this country we spoke of the Treasury, the Home Office, and so on; and whoever was the head of each of those Departments it certainly never was supposed to be Her Majesty. Judging from the Papers, Mr. Bourke had always been consulted as the head of the Prisons Board. It was hard now he should be told he was not the head of his Department, but that the Lord Lieutenant was. That seemed to be playing fast and loose with language, and not calculated to aid the public service. He could not say that the Lord Chancellor's opening observations encouraged one to say this was not a Party question, because it was a case with the noble and learned Lord of *argumentum ad hominem*—"we have done this and you have done the same." This was a matter which ought to be absolutely independent of Party. It was a question which affected the whole Civil Service of the country, and if the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Londonderry) would excuse him he absolutely and totally repudiated the policy of retaliation which the noble Marquess suggested. Nothing could be more destructive of efficiency than the supposition that whichever side got in they could turn out people and put others in. In order to avoid the necessity of that, and in order to avoid the pressure which would produce that it ought to be perfectly clear that this power of the Crown is exercised with due judicial impartiality and that people would not be put off with the sort of excuses Mr. Bourke had been put off with when he asked that they should try the question whether he was the head of his Department or not. He could tell Mr. Bourke without any difficulty that if he went into a Court of law with a Petition of Rights the Judges would tell him they had no jurisdiction. It was possible, however, for the Government and Mr. Bourke to agree to the statement of a special case, and by such means have the question whether Mr. Bourke was the head of his Department or not settled. And, of course, the same thing could be done in the case of Mr. Moffett. There could be no imputation on the Government if they yielded to what certainly appeared to be very reasonable request—namely, that Mr. Bourke and Dr. Moffett should have an opportunity of trying the question without being tripped up at the commencement of their litigation by the statement that they had no rights which the law recognised.

*LORD MORRIS said, he filled, at the personal request of Lord Spencer, the office of visitor to Queen's College, Galway, and, therefore, he felt called upon to say a few words when the case of Dr. Moffett was being canvassed. Dr. Moffett, whose acquaintance he had had for at least 45 years, was recognised on all hands as a man of amiable and blameless character, as one who had earned for himself the respect of his colleagues and the love and admiration of the students. If their Lordships, and he particularly addressed himself to the Members of the Government, were not satisfied with the opinions which they had already received on that subject, he would read a statement made in a newspaper within the last few days by one who I was glad to see remembered his old college—namely, Mr. T. P. O'Connor. Writing in the *Sun* newspaper Mr. T. P. O'Connor said—

> "Dr. Moffett, the President of Queen's College, Galway, whose dismissal from his post is now the general topic of conversation, has been a prominent figure for nearly half a century in Irish academic life. Of the three colleges Galway is the poorest, but it has succeeded in turning out more than its share of men who have secured high places in the professions and public life at home and abroad. Dr. Moffett had to a singular degree the great art of kindling enthusiasm for learning in the most unlikely material, and all over this Empire there are hundreds of Galway students whose feelings towards him are like those Balliol men hold towards Dr. Jowett."

Such was the man who had got two months' notice to quit. That was only a little more than the notice the Home Secretary should give to his kitchen-maid; it was not exactly the treatment to give to a man whose success in the administration of educational matters in Ireland had done immense service to the country. His humble judgment was quite unable to appreciate the grounds on which Dr. Moffett was dismissed. It was said that it was based on an Order in Council passed on the suggestion of a Commission presided over by his respected friend, Sir Matthew Ridley, who was himself a man that had attained to the highest honours at college. Could it be supposed for a moment that it ever entered into the head of Sir Matthew Ridley that a rule, which was suggested to regulate the attendance of clerks in offices under the Treasury, should apply to the head of a great college? He quite agreed with his noble friend on the Woolsack that the rule should be applied rigorously; and if the rule was properly applicable to Dr. Moffett, he must bear it. But Dr. Moffett had the highest legal opinion that the rule did not apply to him. Dr. Moffett and he had been colleagues on the Senate of the Royal University for Ireland for twenty years, and when in 1891 Dr. Moffett's attention was first called to this rule, he naturally consulted his colleagues on the Senate, which included such men as the Lord Chief Baron and the ex-Lord Chancellor Ball, and they were all of opinion that the rule did not apply to the head of a college. The case was also submitted to the Law Officers, with the same result; and so the matter was allowed to drop. That decision had been accepted by his eminent Friend, Sir John Hibbert, the Secretary to the Treasury, a Gentleman with whom he had sat for several years in the House of Commons, who deserved every eulogium which had been passed upon him, but who was himself over seventy years of age. Sir John Hibbert said, in answer to a question put to him, that the thing could not be done. Then, if it could not be done in 1892, 1893, and 1894, what had enabled it to be done in the spring of 1895? It was said that the Law Officers present took a different view of the matter. But which of the Law Officers were right? Was Dr. Moffett to bow to the change in the opinion of the Law Officers on the occasion of every new appointment to the offices? Dr. Moffett had got no answer at all as to why he was to be dismissed. He called it a "dismissal," though one of the local newspapers described it as "a compulsory resignation," which was a nice way of putting it. He did not often intervene in Debates in the House, and especially in Debates on Party matters, but he hoped this was not a Party matter; but he was sometimes amazed and grieved—though that might seem a contradiction in terms—when he heard people's rights dealt with by the *tu quoque* argument. It was said, for instance, that the Conservative Government had done wrong in the case of Mr. Brady, the Fishery Commissioner. He did not know whether they had or not, for he had not read the papers on the matter; but supposing they had done so, that was no reason why the present Government should do wrong to Dr. Moffett. He would, even at the eleventh hour, appeal to the Government to put the case of Dr. Moffett under investigation to see whether a rule which was intended to regulate the hours of Treasury clerks, really applied to the head of a College. Lord Spencer had said that a Petition of Right lay. He could not restrain himself from ejaculating "No" rather loudly when he heard that statement, he was so startled to think that anyone could have advised the noble Earl that a Petition of Right lay against the Crown at the application of an individual who held his office during pleasure, when the pleasure had disappeared. No one that was a lawyer could have suggested such a thing. It was said that Dr. Moffett was a Civil Servant, and that he was therefore subject to the rule. He had heard with amazement the definition which had been given of a Civil Servant, namely, that he was a person who got a salary from the public purse and was entitled to a pension. That was a most alarming doctrine. He had been for nearly a quarter of a century a Judge in Ireland, and had filled for some years the office of Lord Chief Justice. During that time he had drawn a salary and was entitled to a pension, but he should have been very much surprised if he had been told he was a Civil Servant. He wondered what his noble Friend, Lord Russell of Killowen, would say if he were told by some one in the Treasury that he was a Civil Servant, and that he should attend at the Courts at ten o'clock. He wondered what the late Lord Coleridge would say also, especially on the latter point. He hoped the question would not be treated as a Party question. He hoped the Government would do what everyone in Galway—and everyone in Ireland—desired they should do, for Dr. Moffett was universally respected for his services to Education. It was a matter really that was arousing a great deal of public attention. If he were a supporter of the Government he would honestly advise them, in their own interest, to allow Dr. Moffett to remain, for there was growing up a feeling with regard to the case of the President of Galway College which the Government would find it difficult to meet. It could not be met by technicalities. He had a collection of extracts from the Nationalist journals of the province, every one of which—to their credit be it said—regarded with reprobation the intended dismissal of Dr. Moffett. He asked the Government, therefore, to ponder over the matter a little longer. If the rule really applied to Dr. Moffett he must go; but if it not apply, why should he leave his position merely under the despotic use of the Queen's name? He agreed to all that Lord Ashbourne had said, except one thing—that there was no precedent for Dr. Moffett's case. There was a precedent, James II., who took the same course with the heads of Magdalene College a very short time before his fall. *Absit omen!* Those who were responsible for Dr. Moffett's dismissal should not be inclined to follow such a precedent.

Lord MUSKERRY said, that many in Ireland would be glad to hear what the Lord Chancellor had said—that there was the same administration of the law in Ireland as in England. Unfortunately, that was not the case. He should like to know whether Her Majesty's Government were going to treat the public servants in Ireland as the landlords were treated. It was not now a very good thing to be a landlord in Ireland. Would the same thing have to be said of the public servants in Ireland? He had always thought that it was a most desirable thing to have able and efficient men in the public service. That opinion was certainly held at the War Office and the Admiralty. But if an official were to be dismissed or removed, without any cause, at the mere pleasure of an individual, it was impossible to expect good and able men to enter the service. This action appeared to be part of a new scheme of economy on the part of the Government, who took advantage of the work of public officials and then, when they came near to the age entitling to a full pension, got rid of them. Or, was it that the Government, having failed to carry the Home Rule Bill, intended to act on the programme which a Home Rule Government certainly would have carried out, and to remove all those who by the fearless performance of their duty had made themselves obnoxious to the Irish supporters of the Government? Mr. Morley said that Mr. Bourke had been removed for the good of the Service. He did not say what the good was; and there was no other interpretation to his words than that Mr. Bourke had proved unworthy or incapable of his post. Either Mr. Bourke was fit for his post, or he was not; and Mr. Morley had not said that he was unfit. If Mr. Bourke had not committed a fault then Mr. Morley had; and in the latter case it was Mr. Morley, and not Mr. Bourke, who ought have been removed.

The Earl of WEMYSS wished to ask a question with regard to the dismissal of Mr. Bourke. In the correspondence on the subject there was nothing to show the grounds of Mr. Bourke's dismissal. The fact that his age was 62 was not sufficient, because it was at 65 that the Order came into operation. But from 60 to 65 a Civil Servant held office at the pleasure of the head of his Department. No one had suggested that Mr. Bourke was mentally or physically incompetent, or that he had done anything which in any way affected his position. Indeed Lord Londonderry had told the House that Mr. Bourke had actually improved the Irish prisons, and had introduded considerable reforms in prison administration. He had been anxious to hear why Mr. Bourke had been dismissed; and he had listened carefully to what Lord Spencer said. It came to this—that Mr. Bourke was dismissed, not because he was incompetent, nor because he had been guilty of any high misdemeanour but simply because he was not the man to carry out the reforms which were about to be introduced. He wished to ask this plain, straightforward question. Did Lord Spencer mean to say that there were certain reforms about to be proposed in the prisons of Ireland, which the head of the Prisons Board had declined to carry out? If that was not so—if no direct reforms had been proposed which Mr. Bourke declined to carry out—on what ground could the noble Lord stand up and tell the House, having regard to Mr. Bourke's record as a reformer, that he was dismissed because of the belief of somebody, as yet unknown, that certain reforms, as yet unknown, would not be carried out by Mr. Bourke?

Earl SPENCER: I never stated that Mr. Bourke had refused to carry out reforms. I said that, in the opinion of the Irish Government, he was not the man to carry out certain changes, which the Government thought desirable.

The Earl of WEMYSS: Why?

Eeal SPENCER: I am not going to say why. It would not be in the interest of the Public Service to do so.

The Earl of WEMYSS: I am satisfied. It appears to me to be an injury to the Public Service and an injustice to the individual.

The Earl of ROSEBERY moved: "That your Lordships do now adjourn."

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned at Twenty minutes, before Eight o'clock, till To-morrow, Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 11th February, 1895.

The House met at Three of the clock.

NEW WRIT ISSUED.

For the Borough of Colchester, *v.* Captain Herbert S. Naylor-Leyland, Manor of Northstead.—(*Mr. Akers-Douglas.*)

QUESTIONS.

THE MALACCA RAILWAY.

Mr. WILLIAM JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Concession for the Malacca Railway has been granted; and, if not, what is the cause of the delay; and whether arrangements will be made to proceed at once with this most useful undertaking, so that it can be commenced before the rainy season.

The UNDER SECRETARY for the COLONIES (Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): The terms offered by the Government have not yet been accepted by the proposed concessionaires, but negotiations are proceeding.

Mr. W. JOHNSTON: Can the hon. Gentleman say when the delay is likely to terminate?

Mr. S. BUXTON: I believe the delay is not on our side, but on the side of the concessionaires. We shall be glad to conclude the matter as soon as possible.

DISEASE IN INDIAN CANTONMENTS.

Mr. W. McLAREN (Cheshire, Crewe): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India what steps the Indian Government is taking consequent upon the Report of the Departmental Committee appointed to inquire into the rules, regulations, and practice in the Indian cantonments with regard to the treatment of venereal disease; whether legislation is proposed, in conformity with the Report of the Committee, in reference to the system of periodical examination of prostitutes, that the only effective method preventing those systematic practices which have been maintained is by means of express legislation; and, if so, what are the terms of the Bill; and, how soon is it expected that the Bill will become law?

Mr. HANBURY (Preston): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers I should like to ask him whether the Government have received certain representations from the Commander-in-Chief in India with regard to the ravages committed by this class of disease in India, and, if so, whether he will allow those representations to be laid upon the Table; and also whether it is the fact that the Commander-in-Chief two or three days ago stated that—

> "The admissions to hospital in 1893 amounted to nearly 50 per cent. of the entire European force, and as the prevalence and virulence of the diseases were increasing, he feared that last year would show a still higher percentage. It was impossible to estimate by figures the resulting loss in efficiency, but he was certain that it would be lamentable, if the army were tried by heavy marching or a severe campaign."

The SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Mr. H. H. Fowler, Wolverhampton, E.): I cannot undertake to answer from telegraphic reports of what transpires in the Council in India. I have already had experience of inaccuracy of the telegraphic report of what transpired on the Indian Cotton Duties Bill; and the newspapers which gave the telegraphic summary of the Viceroy's speech have not done him the justice to give his speech more fully when it was received by the mail. If they had it would have been seen that it bore a construction the reverse of that it was made to bear in the telegraphic report. I have had no official communication made to me by the Commander in Chief. A Bill dealing with the subjects of my hon. Friend's question was introduced into the Legislative Council by the Indian Government last July; the text of the Bill was published in the *Gazette;* and the opinions of the local Governments were, according to the regular practice, obtained. The consideration of the Bill was proceeded with when the Council re-assembled in Calcutta, and it was referred to a Select Committee. I am informed by telegraph that the Bill has now passed with some Amendments. I expect to receive copies of the Act by the mail which leaves India this week.

INDIAN OPIUM TRAFFIC COMMISSION.

Mr. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he can now inform the House when it is likely to be in possession of any Report from the Royal Commission respecting the Indian Opium Traffic appointed in consequence of the Resolution of the House of June 1893.

Mr. H. H. FOWLER: I cannot answer this question without taking this opportunity to give my public testimony to the assiduity with which the Commission have endeavoured to deal with their difficult task. The Commission have for some weeks been working unremittingly at the preparation of their Report. Some delay is inevitable, owing to the residence in India of two of the members; but I have every reason to believe that the House will be in possession of the Report before Easter.

UNCLAIMED DEPOSITS IN THE POST OFFICE.

Mr. HENNIKER-HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Postmaster General, whether any account is kept of unclaimed deposits in the Post Office Savings Bank; what is the total of such deposits at this moment, and how the money is applied; whether any effort is made to distinguish between deposits merely left for unusually long periods at interest and deposits overlooked or forgotten; and whether he will cause an index of all depositors to be kept at the Head Office, open to inspection on proof of the *bona fides* of the applicant?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. A. Morley, Nottingham, E.): In the Post Office Savings Bank a strict account is kept of the sums standing to the credit of every depositor, and in the case of accounts not recently operated on the interest is added, and the money accumulates in the same manner as in other accounts within the limits prescribed by law. The Post Office Savings Bank has only been in existence 33 years; and it is premature to say that any of its accounts are "overlooked or forgotten." The Department can at any time be called upon to discharge its liability; and not unfrequently demands are made after the lapse of many years. The suggestion contained in the last paragraph of the hon. Member's question would necessitate the preparation of a list of over 6,000,000 names, which are constantly changing, entailing great cost and considerable trouble to the Department. The best information available is always given whenever application is made and the circumstances justify it.

INCREASED INSANITY.

Dr. KENNY (Dublin, College Green): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether he has considered, since last Session, the propriety of taking steps to bring about the appointment of an International Commission, to inquire into the subject of the General Increase of Insanity, with a view to ascertaining how far it may be possible to do anything to prevent the spread of the malady?

The HOME SECRETARY (Mr. Asquith, Fife, E.): The Government have obtained through the Foreign Office, during the Recess, a quantity of information on this subject, which there has not been time fully to digest. As at present advised, however, I doubt the necessity or expediency of appointing an International Commission.

LUNATIC ASYLUMS, IRELAND.

DR. KENNY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, with reference to a deputation recently received by him at Dublin Castle, consisting of the Lord Mayor of Dublin and Governors from the various district lunatic asylums, what steps he proposes to take to enlarge the asylum accommodation, so as to make adequate provision for the increasing numbers of the insane in Ireland.?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): The Board of Control, in whom is vested the duty of providing accommodation for the insane poor of Ireland, is making every possible exertion to overtake the crowding that exists in many of the district lunatic asylums. A new asylum is in course of erection at Antrim; plans have been prepared for the new asylum at Portrane for the Dublin district, and preliminary steps have been taken for the provision of new asylums for Londonderry and the city of Belfast. Extensive additions and alterations are in progress at Armagh, Carlow, Kilkenny, Letterkenny, and Maryborough. Plans have been prepared and are under consideration for the enlargement of Ballinasloe, Downpatrick, Enniscorthy, Monaghan, Omagh, Richmond, Sligo, and Waterford; while additions to Limerick, Ennis, and Killarney have been suggested, and communications with reference to these are passing between the Board of Control and the local Boards of Governors, who are always consulted with reference to structural works. Extensive additions have been recently made to Clonmel, Cork, and Mullingar.

THE RECORDER'S COURT IN DUBLIN.

MR. W. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick's): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether his attention has been drawn to the resolution adopted at the annual meeting of members of the Dublin Mercantile Association (Limited), held on the 30th ultimo, in which they express their opinion that the Order of the Privy Council, increasing the sittings of the Recorder's Court from four to six times per annum, is totally insufficient; and protest against the long interval between the Courts, during which there are no facilities to recover money by legal measures, and the time that is requisite to overtake the accumulated business in Court and also by the Sheriff; and request that the matter should be reconsidered by the Privy Council, with a view to a further increase of the sittings; whether he will state what reasons the Privy Council have not for assimilating the sittings to those of similar Courts in England and Scotland; and whether the subject has been under the consideration of that Body for the past two years?

SIR A. K. ROLLIT (Islington, S.): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers, may I ask him whether he is aware that this is not only an Irish but is also an English grievance, and that the Chamber of Commerce have passed a resolution in favour of the views suggested by the question?

MR. J. MORLEY: No; I was not aware of it, Sir, my mind being so fully occupied with Irish grievances. I have seen the resolution in question. After considerable correspondence with the Recorder of Dublin, it was arranged that two additional sittings should be given by him in the year. This, he states, will make his sittings almost continuous, and puts Dublin on the same footing with the cities of Belfast and Cork. I am advised that it would be reasonable to wait till the experiment of these two additional sittings has been tried before imposing additional sittings on the Recorder, who states his inability to meet an increased demand on his time?

MR. FIELD: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that in Newcastle-on-Tyne the County Court Judge sits six times a month?

MR. J. MORLEY: I am not aware, but I should be sorry there should be any partiality to the disadvantage of Dublin.

RIGHTS OF WAY IN COUNTY DUBLIN.

MR. J. J. CLANCY (Dublin, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether his attention has been directed to the threatened encroachments on certain public rights of way in the neighbourhood of Sutton and Howth, in the county of Dublin, by Mr. Andrew Jameson; and, whether he will consult the Attorney-General for Ireland with a view to his intervention on behalf of the public in the legal proceedings which Mr. Jameson has instituted for the purpose of legalising the encroachments referred to?

MR. J. MORLEY: Mr. Jameson appears to have instituted proceedings in the Land Court, Ireland, which may have the effect of establishing certain rights claimed by him, and disputed by some of the inhabitants of Howth and Sutton. The Crown, I am advised, are not entitled to intervene in those proceedings, nor does there seem to be precedent for it.

H.M.S. "FANNY."

CAPTAIN J. McCALMONT (Antrim, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, when H.M.S. *Fanny*, now lying in Larne Lough, was built; if it is now proposed to fit her with new boilers; what the approximate cost of these will be; and, whether he will consider the advisability of providing a more seaworthy vessel to carry out the duties for which the *Fanny* is now detailed?

*THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. E. ROBERTSON, Dundee): The *Fanny* is a tender for coastguard service and is attached to the coastguard ship at Kingstown. She was built in 1851. It is not proposed to fit her with new boilers; and the question of her relief will be considered when her present machinery and boilers have had some further service, during a limited time for which they are reported efficient.

CAPTAIN M'CALMONT: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that advertisements for tenders for new boilers for the *Fanny* appeared in the local papers of the 4th inst.

MR. E. ROBERTSON said, he had no information to that effect.

THE CABLE TO ALDERNEY.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Postmaster General, Will he explain why it was that cable communication between this country and the Island of Alderney was interrupted from September 1894, till near the end of January 1895, or later; whether he is aware that the cable companies are accustomed to repair a broken cable in less than a week at any depth; whether communication by cable with Alderney is now restored; and, whether he will insist on greater speed in repairing operationr if another interruption should occur?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY, Nottingham, E.): The break in the telegraph cable to Alderney occurred at a dangerous place and at a time when a good deal of urgent work was thrown on the cable ships of the Department, one of which it was found necessary to furnish with new cable machinery. At the present time one of the ships is experiencing great difficulty in effecting the repair of an important cable in the North Sea; while the other, which was actually proceeding to the work at Alderney, has unfortunately been in collision. I can only say that as soon as one or other of the ships is available she shall be sent to restore the communication at Alderney.

ALLOTMENTS.

MR. BILL (Staffordshire, Leek): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he will be able in the course of the Session to obtain a Return of the number of new allotments acquired since the last Return, dated 18th July 1890, in accordance with his answer given on 12th April 1894?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. H. GARDNER, Saffron Walden, Essex): I am glad to say that the Treasury have sanctioned the expenditure of a sum of £3,000 in connection with the preparation of a new Return of Agricultural Holdings, including allotments. The Officers of the Inland Revenue will be employed for the purpose of collecting information in their respective districts. It will not be possible for those Officers to complete their work until after the collection of the annual Agricultural Returns in June next, and I cannot therefore undertake that the Return shall be issued in the course of the Session, but we shall, of course, do whatever we can to expedite its publication.

THE POTATO CROP IN CLARE.

MR. W. REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been drawn to the failure of the potato crop in many districts of County Clare; and, whether the Government intend to take any steps to avert the distress likely to be felt in the districts affected?

MR. J. MORLEY: The condition of the small occupiers and labouring classes, as affected by the partial failure of the potato crop in County Clare, has formed the subject of careful investigation by the Local Government Board, and the result of the inquiries made is, that, although many families have been reduced to straitened circumstances from this cause, yet it is not considered that at present destitution exists among the people to such an extent as to render it necessary to adopt exceptional measures for their relief. The numbers now on relief in the various Unions in the county compare favourably with the numbers at the corresponding period of last year, with the exception of the Tulla Union, where there has been an increase in the number of persons to whom outdoor relief has been given. This, however, may be due to the fact that outdoor relief had to be reduced in this Union last year. The condition of Clare is receiving very careful attention, and timely notice will be given to Government of any change in the circumstances of the people.

THE FACTORY AND TRUCK BILL.

SIR C. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether it was intended to introduce, and, if possible, to ask the House to read a second time before Easter, the Factory Bill, named in the Speech from the Throne, and the Truck Bill promised by him, in order that they may be sent to a Standing Committee?

THE COAL MINES ACT.

MR. DAVID THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he can state when he hopes to be able to introduce the Bill for amending the Coal Mines Act, promised in his recent speeches in the country, though not mentioned in the Speech from the Throne; and, whether it is his intention to refer the Bill after Second Reading to a Standing Committee?

MR. ASQUITH: It has always been the intention of the Government to ask the House to send these Bills to a Standing Committee. I cannot at present make any statement as to the date of their introduction, except that there will be no avoidable delay.

TRIAL OF THE CONVICT TWISS.

CAPTAIN M'CALMONT asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland how many jurors were ordered by the Crown to stand aside in the recent trial of the convict Twiss at the Cork Assizes, and on what grounds they were challenged?

MR. J. MORLEY: Twenty jurors were ordered to stand by. The accused challenged 16. His right to challenge extended to 20. Four of his challengers were unused, which is some evidence of the fairness of the election of jurors in the case. The Crown Solicitor ordered those jurors alone to stand by who, on grounds known to him, were not fit to serve; but he did so under positive directions to order no juror to stand aside on the ground of politics or religion, which he carefully observed. I do not know from what point of view the hon. Member puts this question. But I may tell him that the case was tried by a Roman Catholic Judge, the three prosecuting counsel were Catholic, and I am told, though I have no official knowledge of the fact, that a considerable majority of the jurors were Catholics.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): Can the right hon. Gentleman give us any information as to the grounds on which these jurors were ordered to stand by?

MR. J. MORLEY: No; the matter is in the discretion of the Crown Solicitor; but he received instruction that no juror should be ordered to stand by on the ground of religion or political opinion.

HAULBOWLINE DOCKYARD.

CAPTAIN DONELAN (Cork, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he is aware that some of the labourers employed at Haulbowline Dockyard were dismissed on Saturday last; and if he can state how many have been discharged from the Engineer's and Chief Carpenter's departments since

1st July 1894; and, whether, in view of the acute distress at present prevailing at Queenstown through dearth of employment, and the undertaking given by the Admiralty that provision would be made to avoid the dismissal of workmen during the winter months, steps will be taken to re-instate without delay all labourers thus discharged?

MR. E. ROBERTSON: None of the regular hands, either established or hired, have been discharged from Haulbowline. In certain cases it has been found necessary to dispense with the services of men who were temporarily employed on specific work, and on the distinct understanding that their employment would cease when such work was completed. Six men were discharged in this way on Saturday week. Including these six men, there are only 23 men less employed at Haulbowline at present than on September 1st last, the date on which returns of numbers employed were instituted. I regret that at present the requirements of the Haulbowline Dockyard do not enable the Admiralty to engage the services of any more workmen for temporary employment.

MR. KEARLEY (Devonport) asked whether there was not a wholesale discharge at many English dockyards just before Christmas?

MR. ROBERTSON: That is a totally different subject, and I must have notice of the question.

SHIPWRIGHTS AS FITTERS.

MR. WRIGHTSON (Stockton) asked the Secretary to the Admiralty whether it was the practice of the authorities in Devonport and Pembroke Dockyards to employ shipwrights who were workers in wood to do the work of fitters who were workers in iron; and whether, in the case of iron watertight doors in the *Renown*, now in Pembroke Dockyard, they had been so defectively fitted by shipwrights that properly-trained fitters had to be finally employed to rectify these defects before the proper tests could be applied?

MR. E. ROBERTSON: The practice at all the Dockyards is, to employ men of the trade, called shipwrights, on work in connection with the construction and repairs of the hulls and fitting of ships, usually done in private yards by iron shipbuilders, shipwrights, and fitters. The Dockyard shipwright is, and has been for more than 30 years, a worker in metal as well as in wood. The only ground for the statement in the second part of the question is as follows:—The watertight doors of the *Renown* were supplied by contract, and separated from their frames by fitters at Pembroke Dockyard. The shipwrights fitted and fastened the frames of the doors to the bulkheads of the ship. The doors were then attached to the frames by the fitters and subjected to the usual water test, when it was found that out of the nine frames that had been fitted by the shipwrights one only leaked at its joining with the bulkhead. A fitter being at hand, attending to the hanging of the doors, the foreman of the ship ordered him to make good the defect discovered, instead of sending for a shipwright to rectify it. This small incident cannot be taken as proof of the general inefficiency of the shipwrights' fitting work, as similar adjustments of work done by all trades are sometimes necessary.

*MR. J. RICHARDSON (Durham): Is it not a fact that a Committee has been appointed to decide what is carpenters' work and what is fitters' work?

MR. ROBERTSON: No, I do not think so.

MR. WILLIAM ALLAN: (Gateshead): Is it not a fact that shipwrights do work on Her Majesty's ships in dockyards which would not be allowed to be done by shipwrights in private yards; and is it not a fact that you can see daylight through some of the fittings and joinings? Further, may I ask whether there is any private yard in Great Britain which would allow shipwrights to do the same work on ships that shipwrights have to do in Her Majesty's dockyards?

MR. ROBERTSON: It appears to me that that question is covered by the answer I have already given. As to daylight being seen through the joints, that I am not prepared to assent to.

MR. KEARLEY: Does the hon. Gentleman intend to appoint a Committee?

MR. ROBERTSON: Upon that point I can make no statement without further notice.

LANDOWNERS IN SLIGO.

MR. COLLERY (Sligo, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord

Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he has received representations from the Sligo and Dromore West Boards of Guardians, as well as from a public meeting held at Dromore West and presided over by the Lieutenant of the County Sligo, as to the condition of the poor landowners in portions of those Unions; whether he has had any Report from the Local Government Board Inspector as to the failure of the potato crop and damage done by the late storms, particularly in the Lissadill East and West electoral divisions of Sligo Union, as well as that portion of Dromore West Union bordering on Mayo; whether he has been informed that the high tide caused by the recent storm swept inwards on the townland of Ballyconnell, sweeping away all the turf, hay, and potatoes the poor people had, and covering the land with large stones and rubbish, most of which can never be cleared; whether he is aware that one poor widow has had the whole of her four acres rendered permanently useless, and that in order to relieve present and immediate wants the Sligo Board of Guardians had to instruct their relieving officer to give provisional relief to the small landowners who lost most of their effects; and, whether the Government will take steps to at once relieve this state of things?

MR. J. MORLEY: Representations of the nature indicated in the first paragraph have been received. The latest reports received by me do not, however, point to the necessity for the opening of relief works in the district referred to, but I have directed further and careful inquiry to be made, and especially as to the extent of the losses occasioned to small occupiers by the late storms.

FATALITY IN GLASGOW HARBOUR.

SIR DONALD H. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate if his attention has been called to the drowning of a young man named George Brodie Macinnes on the 26th of November last, while engaged in work upon a stage suspended over the stern of the steamship *Avon*, in Glasgow Harbour; and whether he will cause inquiry to be made into all the circumstances, and ascertain why no investigation took place into this case, in which the fatal result is attributed to gross carelessness?

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR, Clackmannan, &c.): In this case inquiry was made in the usual way, immediately after the death, by the Procurator Fiscal. He reported to the Crown Office on the 7th December that the death appeared to have been accidental, and that it seemed to him there was no blame attaching to anyone. Mr. Macinnes, the young man's father made no complaint to the Fiscal, but he complained to an official of the Board of Trade that sufficient means of saving life were not provided in the harbour. He afterwards departed from this ground of complaint, and by his legal advisers urged that the inquiry by the Procurator Fiscal should be re-opened upon another ground—namely, that the stage upon which the young man was working had been wrongly constructed, and that this had been wilfully concealed by the ship's people from the Authorities. A second inquiry was held, and it was shown that there was no foundation for this charge. In the meantime the original complaint to the Board of Trade had been forwarded to me, and by my directions the Procurator Fiscal pressed Mr. Macinnes to name anyone who could speak to his complaint that adequate means of saving life were not provided. He selected the Harbour Master of Glasgow, who completely negatived his allegation. I think that, as the result of the three inquiries, it has been clearly shown that there was no negligence in connection with this unfortunate accident, and that the whole arrangements were usual and proper.

SIR D. H. MACFARLANE: I should like to ask if the fellow-workman on the same stage was examined as a witness?

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: I have not a note of the evidence of the witnesses, but I happen to remember that persons working on the adjoining stage were examined.

PRISON LABOUR ABROAD.

MR. W. C. QUILTER (Suffolk, Sudbury): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware that, under a concession granted by the Belgian Government, cocoa-nut mats are being manufactured by the prisoners in the Colonies-Agricoles at one penny per prisoner per day; that such mats are being imported into this country in great quantities and sold at a price which, whilst leaving a handsome profit, would not in England cover the cost of the labour alone; and, whether he will make a representation to the Belgian Government or take other steps with a view to putting a stop to this competition of prisoners in that country with English free labour, and especially with those engaged in the industry of mat-making in the South Suffolk Division?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): Her Majesty's Government are aware that mats are produced in the Belgian Colonies-Agricoles by prison labour at low rates of wages, and that some of these mats are exported to England; but we have no knowledge of their being imported in any large quantities. Representations on the subject could not with advantage be addressed to Belgium alone, in view of the fact that other Powers permit the employment of prison labour for similar purposes. General diplomatic action abroad, in the sense suggested, would not in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government be likely to be attended with any useful result.

MR. W. C. QUILTER asked whether the hon. Baronet was aware that the machinery used in these co-called agricultural colonies was imported from an English prison; and whether, after a decision arrived at by the Home Secretary, he did not consider under the circumstances of the case the destruction of British industry like this was not of sufficient importance to warrant him in making representations to the Belgian Government?

SIR E. GREY: We have no knowledge at the Foreign Office whether the machinery was made in England or not; but as far as the information at our disposal goes, I do not think it is a matter in which the Foreign Office could interfere.

LONDONDERRY BARRACKS.

MR. J. ROSS (Londonderry): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, what is the cause of the continued delay in commencing the building of the new barracks at Londonderry?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling): As the hon. Member was informed at the end of last Session, there are difficulties in acquiring the necessary site, which can only be overcome by an Act of Parliament. It was not practicable then to carry through the necessary Bill; but one will be introduced very shortly, and I hope the hon. Member will give us his assistance in passing it quickly through the House.

A STATUE OF OLIVER CROMWELL.

MR. W. JOHNSTON: I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works when it is intended to erect the statue of Oliver Cromwell, and if he can specify the proposed site?

MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON (Shropshire, Oswestry): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers that question I should like to ask whether, at the same time, he can find a niche for the statue of Protector Richard, better known as tumble-down Dick, the heir and successor of his Highness Oliver Cromwell?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. H. J. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): That is a point which has not been under my consideration, and I do not think that the hon. Gentleman really expects me to give an answer. In answer to the question on the Paper, the sum is included in the Estimates for the Houses of Parliament for 1895–96, with the view to the early erection of the statue. The question of the exact site is still under consideration, but when the Estimates come before the House I expect to be able to give the hon. Member full information.

THE IRISH POTATO CROP.

MR. J. MAINS (Donegal, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether his attention has been drawn to the failure of the potato crop in the districts of Glengask, Malin and Clonmany, County Donegal; and whether, in view of the threatened destitution in these districts, he will have relief works started there?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Local Government Board have received representations as to the existence of distress in the districts of Donegal referred to in the question, and have recently made careful inquiries into the condition of the people there. There is no doubt that much poverty exists in the locality, as the people almost entirely depend on the fishing for support, and this has not been successful of late. It does not appear, however, that the distress is such as to justify the opening of relief works, and I have asked the Local Government Board inspector, who was instructed to attend the meeting of the guardians to be held to-day, to report to me the result of his further investigations.

PRIVATE LETTER BOXES.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON: I beg to ask the Postmaster General, whether he is aware that in many districts, especially in provincial towns and in the villages, much of the letter carriers' time is wasted in waiting at doors which are unprovided with letter-boxes; and, whether he can do anything, either by legislation or by official appeal to householders, to secure the more general attachment of letter-boxes to the doors of houses throughout the kingdom?

MR. A. MORLEY: The Post Office has frequently, for many years past, issued, and from time to time continues to issue, appeals to householders to provide letter-boxes in their street doors; but, notwithstanding, it is undoubtedly the fact that many houses are still unprovided with such appliances for facilitating the work of the Postmen. The Department has no legal powers in the matter, and at present it is not considered to be necessary to ask for them. But I hope that further attention having been called to the subject by the hon. Member, some good result may follow.

PENSIONS OF PRISON OFFICERS.

MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, whether his attention has been called to the position, in respect of pensions, of Prison Officers who have been in the prison service for not less than 20 years, and, being not less than 60 years of age, have become incapable from age or infirmity, and have retired from the service; whether he is aware that, in most of the counties of England and in Cumberland in particular, such Officers entered the Prison Service upon the terms and conditions that upon retirement they were to receive two-thirds of their salaries by way of superannuation allowance, and that these terms and conditions were adhered to by the County Authorities so long as the prisons were under their control, and pensions paid upon the two-thirds scale; whether he is aware that The Prisons Act, 1877, provided that existing Officers should hold their offices by the same tenure and upon like terms and conditions as if the Act had not passed; whether the Treasury now decline to recognise the claim of such Prison Officers to a superannuation allowance at the rate of two-thirds of their salaries; and, why Prison Officers retiring at the present time are placed in a worse position than those who retired before The Prisons Act, 1877, came into force, although the conditions are similar?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT): The reply to the first question is Yes. The County Authorities had discretionary power under Statute to award a pension not exceeding two-thirds of the salary after 20 years' service, but the Government are not aware that County Authorities were bound to give the maximum pension in each case. Under the Prisons Act of 1877, this discretion passed to the Treasury, who have exercised it precisely as in the case of all other permanent Civil Servants. The right to be pensioned subject to this discretion was retained to Prisons Officers, in common with all their other rights. It is still open to the Local Authorities under whom the Officers served before 1877, to make up from local funds the maximum of two-thirds in each case. The Treasury do not admit the claim of the Officers to the maximum in every case. What I have stated already answers my hon. Friend's fifth question.

THE MERRY AND CUNNINGHAME CASE.

MR. J. CALDWELL (Mid Lanark): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether he will issue instructions to the Procurator Fiscal of Lanarkshire, that in the event of an application being made for the consent of the Crown to an action for Breach of Interdict arising out of the decision in the Merry and Cunninghame case, the application be reported to the Lord Advocate, and his sanction obtained before such consent is given?

MR. J. B. BALFOUR: I shall send to the Procurator Fiscal a copy of the answers which I have given to my hon. Friend in the House. These will show the conditions which should, in my judgment, be fulfilled before a consent to a petition and complaint in respect of an alleged breach of the Interdict in question is given.

THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS COMMISSION.

Mr. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether, having regard to the fact that the Chairman of the Royal Commission (Highlands and Islands, 1892) states that the preparation of the Report, including the Appendix, is being pushed forward vigorously, and that the surveyor is presently engaged with no fewer than two assistants, steps will be taken to augment the surveyor's staff so that the work may be pressed forward more vigorously than is possible with two assistants; and whether he can state when the Report will be issued?

The SECRETARY for SCOTLAND (Sir G. O. Trevelyan): In October last the Treasury, at my request, sanctioned the employment by the Commission, of the extra surveyors whom they asked for as necessary to complete the work. The Chairman of the Commission informs me that the final proofs of the maps, which are somewhat elaborate, are expected to be in the hands of the Stationery Office by the end of this month, and it will then rest with that Office to circulate them, along with the Report and Appendices, as soon as possible after presentation to Parliament.

Mr. MAXWELL (Dumfriesshire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he has received petitions from the Nith and Annan Fishery Boards, and also from the Whammel net-fishers, asking for an inquiry into the laws affecting the salmon fisheries in the Solway Firth; and whether it is the intention of the Government to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the operation of these laws?

Sir G. O. TREVELYAN: I have received the Petitions referred to by the hon. Member. The question is one which affects English as well as Scottish interests, and is receiving the close consideration of the different Departments of the Government who are responsible at the present moment.

COAL-DUST.

Mr. DAVID THOMAS: I beg to ask the Secretary for the Home Department whether, with a view to removing the doubt still unfortunately existing in the minds of many persons engaged in colliery operations as to the effect of coal-dust in producing and intensifying explosions in mines, he will cause experiments, similar to those made by Mr. Hall in Lancashire, to be made in other mining districts, especially in South Wales, and with coal-dust provided from mines in the locality in which the experiments are made by workmen and officials jointly, under the supervision of the person conducting the experiments?

Mr. ASQUITH: I gather from the question that what is desired is, to demonstrate the dangers of dry coal-dust in mines, not for the information of experts, but for the instructions of workmen. No specific proposals are embodied in the question, and the possibility of doing what is wished will to some extent depend upon the cost which it may involve. I can, therefore, only say that, if any scheme is suggested for carrying out the desired object, it shall receive my most careful attention, and so far as is practicable I shall be glad to co-operate in its execution.

THE IRISH POOR LAW.

Mr. GILHOOLY (Cork County, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in view of the fact that the rateable qualification of a Poor Law Guardian in Ireland has been considerably reduced, he will consider the advisability of reducing the rateable qualification of a member of a Dispensary Committee?

Mr. J. MORLEY: Under Section 7 of the Poor Relief (Ireland) Act, 1851, elective members of Dispensary Committees must be liable to pay rates in respect of property of the annual value of £30 at least. I certainly think it anomalous that the qualification of the elective members of these Committees should be fixed at £30, while that of the Guardians, who are *ex-officio* members, is considerably lower; but legislation would be necessary to deal with the matter.

THE BANTRY ESTATE.

Mr. GILHOOLY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland—Is he aware the trustees of the Bantry Estate have, by claiming a right to the foreshore, prevented the erection of a boat-slip at Trafrask, and that a number of the tenants of said estate have been thrown out of employment, and are in a state of destitution; and, if so, what steps the Congested Districts Board and the Board of Trade propose taking in the matter?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I have not received sufficient information to enable me to reply to this question to-day, and will thank the hon. Gentleman to defer it until Thursday next.

BOARD OF TRADE SUB-INSPECTORS.

Mr. MACDONALD (Tower Hamlets, Bow): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade what duties have been assigned to the new Sub-inspectors; what cases they have up to the present inquired into; and whether it is the intention of the Board to publish their Reports; and, if not, on what grounds?

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. Bryce, Aberdeen, S.): The Sub-inspectors are chiefly engaged in dealing with the returns of accidents to servants of railway companies. They also render assistance in regard to complaints of unreasonable hours of work, and they also generally assist the principal Inspectors. Thirty-four investigations of accidents to servants have been, or are being, made by them, and in addition, in a large number of cases, the Sub-inspectors have made recommendations on accident returns with a view to preventing the recurrence of certain classes of accidents. Any Report which is on a subject and in a form which makes it suitable for publication will be published; but the Reports hitherto received; while valuable to the Board of Trade, are not within this category.

GRANTS TO IRISH SCHOOLS.

Mr. KNOX (Cavan): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether there is any other anthority under the Education Act of 1892 to decide whether a school is efficient except the Justices in Petty Sessions; and whether he contemplates that the giving or refusal of a grant to a school other than a national school shall depend on the decision of the Justices?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The Education Act of 1892 provides that a Court of Summary Jurisdiction may make an Order for the attendance of a child at some national or other efficient school. The Act does not define what is an efficient school, and the Court of Summary Jurisdiction must determine it for the *purpose of its order, and for no other purpose*, if the question be raised. The making of a grant to a school does not depend on the decision of the Justices. Under Section 18 of the Act it may be made to all elementary schools conducted in accordance with the regulations of the National Board of Education.

QUARTER SESSIONS IN GALWAY.

Colonel NOLAN (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, if there are any Quarter Sessions held in the baronies of Ballymore and Dunmore in the county of Galway; and, if not, would he consider the desirability of holding two Quarter Sessions in each year in Dunmore?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The Quarter Sessions for the baronies mentioned in the question are held at Tuam, which is partly in the barony of Dunmore and partly in the barony of Clare. The hon. and gallant Gentleman wrote to me in November last in favour of a re-arrangement of the Quarter Sessions in question, and that letter, together with the observations thereon of the County Court Judge, have been referred to a Committee of the Privy Council for Report.

COUNTY CONTRACTORS.

Mr. L. P. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been drawn to a judgment recently delivered in the Court of Queen's Bench, Ireland, in the case of Doherty, a road contractor in Londonderry, the effect of which is that county contractors cannot be paid at the next Assizes for the work which they will then have completed; and, whether, in view of the fact that, if acted upon, the effect of the judgment will be to cause serious loss and inconvenience to a large body of people and the disarrangement of fiscal affairs of the various Irish counties, he will consider the advisability of introducing a short non-contentious Bill to remedy this state of things?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I am informed that the decision in the case referred to did not lay down the principle stated in the question, and was a decision on the particular facts of the case alone. I am also informed that its effect will not be as stated in the second paragraph, and that an appeal in the case is pending to the Court of Appeal.

THE TRAINING SHIP "NORTHAMPTON."

Captain DONELAN: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he can say when the training ship *Northampton* may be expected to pay another visit to Cork Harbour?

Mr. E. ROBERTSON: It is proposed that Queenstown should be included among the ports that the *Northampton* will visit when she leaves on her next cruise, probably about the end of the present month.

Mr. WEIR inquired whether there was any intention to send a training ship to Stornoway?

Mr. ROBERTSON: I must have notice of that question.

Captain DONELAN asked whether, on the last occasion that the *Northampton* visited Queenstown, a far larger number of applicants presented themselves than the ship could accommodate; and, whether, in view of this fact, the Admiralty would consider the advisability of placing a training ship at Queenstown?

Mr. ROBERTSON: It will be considered.

THE BOYLE POLICE BARRACK.

Mr. TULLY (Leitrim, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the attention of the Constabulary Authorities has been drawn to the inconvenience caused by the fact that the police barrack for the Boyle district is situated at a considerable distance from the town; and whether he can state if it is the intention of the Authorities to provide a suitable barrack for the police within the town of Boyle?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The Constabulary Department is aware that the present barrack at Boyle occupies an inconvenient position, and is otherwise objectionable. For a considerable time past efforts have been made to procure a better house, and the Department is at present negotiating for premises which occupy a central position in the main street of the town. A satisfactory arrangement will, it is expected, be shortly arrived at.

DISMISSAL OF AN IRISH SCHOOL TEACHER.

Dr. KENNY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether it has been brought to his notice that Mr. Quinlivan, recently school teacher to the Stradbally (Queen's County) National School, has been dismissed from his post by the manager, the Rev. Mr. Brennan, P.P., without any cause assigned, and that the Rev. Mr. Brennan took forcible possession of the school by breaking in the door; whether the police were present on the occasion, and, if so, for what reason and by whose directions were they present; whether he is aware that Mr. Quinlivan, relying on the recent resolution of the Bishops at Maynooth, that an appeal would lie to the bishop of the diocese in all such cases as above, did appeal to the bishop (the Most Rev. Dr. Lynch) and the coadjutor bishop (the Most Rev. Dr. Comerford), the latter of whom replied that he could not interfere, and the former did not reply at all; and whether he will cause an inquiry into this case?

MR. J. MORLEY: I have not yet completed the inquiries which I directed to be made into this case, and regret to have to ask the hon. Gentleman to defer the question till to-morrow.

POST-OFFICE SORTERS.

SIR A. K. ROLLIT: I beg to ask the Postmaster General when he will feel himself able to give a reply to the representations of their grievances put before him by a deputation from the Sorting Staff in May 1894?

MR. A. MORLEY: I hope to be able to give a reply shortly. It is right to add that the delay in giving one has been due to the Sorters themselves. By no means the least important of their petitions was that their duties might be re-arranged, and they undertook to show how this could be done with due regard to financial considerations. From only two out of the four main sections or divisions at the Chief Office have suggestions on the subject yet been received, and none at all from the other offices which were represented by the deputation.

IRISH ROCK LIGHTHOUSES.

CAPTAIN McCALMONT: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been drawn to the hardship inflicted on the keepers of rock lighthouses off the Irish coast by their not being made relieving stations; would he state how many of these rock lights have no relief; whether these light-keepers, with their families, are on these rocks for three or four years at a time, the children being, of course, without any opportunity for education of any kind; whether he is aware that these people suffered severely on some of the rocks during the recent gales, owing to flooding and want of fresh water; and, whether, as the Board of Irish Lights are unable to carry out these reforms owing to want of funds, he would consider the propriety of providing the necessary funds for thus improving their condition?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. BRYCE, Aberdeen, S.): The Board of Trade are fully aware of the difficulties in connection with island or isolated lighthouses on the Irish coast. There are 14 of these, of which the most pressing cases are said by the Irish Lights Commissioners to be Slyne Head (two lights), Tearaght, Maidens Rocks (two lights), and Eagle Island (two lights); and it is the case that, when the keepers at such isolated stations remain there for several years at a time, the disadvantages referred to in regard to the education of their children are, no doubt, experienced. It is also true that recently in Eagle Island, in common with other stations, the light-keepers suffered severely during the gales. The Commissioners of Irish Lights are, however, quite alive to the necessity for converting some of the more exposed stations into relieving stations whenever this can properly be done; and the Board of Trade, who are alive to the hardships which some of these cases present, are fully prepared to consider on its merits any definite application to that effect.

NEWSPAPER CORRESPONDENTS IN ARMENIA.

***MR. F. S. STEVENSON** (Suffolk, Eye): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether it is the fact that newspaper correspondents are not allowed to visit the Sasun District; and, whether the prohibition applies only to that district and the rest of the vilayet of Bitlis, or whether it extends to other vilayets also: and, if so, to which?

THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. GREY): The Turkish Government have decided not to allow newspaper correspondents to visit Asia Minor during the sittings of the Bitlis Commission of Inquiry.

THE UNEMPLOYED.

MR. KEIR HARDIE (West Ham, S.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when it is proposed to move for the appointment of the Committee on the unemployed; and whether it will be put down for a time at which it can, if necessary, be discussed?

MR. J. MORLEY: The terms of reference to the Committee will be put down on the Paper to-night. It is proposed to move the Committee on Wednesday next.

SOLDIERS ON FURLOUGH.

MR. YERBURGH, (Chester): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will explain why the privilege, which was granted in December 1890, to soldiers on furlough, of being conveyed by railway at a single ordinary third-class fare for the double journey for any period of leave from one day upward, was, in August 1894, so far restricted that it is now only granted to soldiers travelling to visit their friends for a period of one week or more; and whether he would use his influence with the responsible authority to have the above restriction removed and to secure the re-granting of the privilege given in 1890?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The concession made by the Railway Companies was, that the cheap tickets might be granted to soldiers going on furlough to visit their friends—that is, for periods of absence exceeding six days. By some misunderstanding, however, the cheap tickets were frequently obtained for soldiers proceeding only "on pass" for even a single day. The railway companies brought these irregular issues of furlough tickets to the notice of the Military Authorities; and an Army Order was therefore issued, for the guidance of Commanding Officers, defining the intention of the original grant of these cheap tickets. It must be remembered that these cheap tickets are given by the favour of the railway companies, in excess of any statutory obligation, and I cannot press them, therefore, in the matter.

THE LIQUOR TRADE IN RHODESIA.

*MR. SNAPE (Lancashire, Heywood): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been drawn to the prospectus of the Rhodesia Mining and Finance Company (Limited), in which claim is laid to a special grant, by the British South Africa Company, of land near Buluwayo, subject to the formation of a brewery and distillery company; and whether the Government will interfere to prevent the British South Africa Company establishing breweries and distilleries in the territories they control, in the face of the havoc made amongst the Natives, and of the request by Native Chiefs for the exclusion of intoxicating liquors from admission into their territory.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): My hon. Friend has forwarded me the prospectus in question. The British South Africa Company are under an obligation, created by the 12th Article of their Charter, so to regulate the traffic in spirits and other intoxicating liquors in the territories under their administration as, so far as practicable, to prevent the sale of any spirits or other intoxicating liquor to any Natives; and that obligation, I am advised, they are anxious to fulfil and are fulfilling.

MR. SNAPE inquired whether it was fulfilling the obligation to sanction the establishment of a brewery and distillery in the country?

MR. BUXTON: Europeans are rapidly going into the country, and, under these circumstances, we have not thought it our duty to prohibit the sale of liquors there. We shall, however, take care that the British South Africa Company fulfil their obligations under the Charter.

*MR. SNAPE: Is it not the fact that the Natives still form the bulk of the population in the country?

MR. BUXTON: No doubt that is so; but these breweries and distilleries are with the view of supplying the wants of the European population alone. The question does not arise in regard to the Native population.

THE WRECK OF THE "ELBE."

*MR. H. S. FOSTER (Suffolk, Lowestoft): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he has now satisfied himself that the wreck of the s.s. *Elbe* is a source of serious danger to the property of fishing vessels and trawlers by reason of the position of the vessel in the centre of the fishing beds, and the liability of the trawls and nets to get foul of the wreck; and whether he has taken any steps, as promised, for the placing of a lightship or lightbuoy over the position of the wreck?

MR. BRYCE: The Board of Trade have no power to destroy the wreck of the *Elbe* or to place a lightship or lightbuoy on the spot. I have, however, informally communicated with the authorities of the Trinity House on the subject. I gather that they have no funds available for a purpose of this kind except such as arise from the Mercantile Marine Fund, and that that fund has never been drawn upon except where dangers arise to navigation in the strict sense of the term, and not as is put forward in this case to the nets or trawling gear of fishing boats, the reason being that fishing boats do not contribute to the Mercantile Marine Fund. It is also pointed out that the site of the wreck is nearer to the coast of Holland than to our own coast. I understand, however, that at my request the Authorities of the Trinity House are further considering the matter.

MR. MACDONA (Southwark, Rotherhithe) asked whether it was not advisable to come to some understanding with foreign Governments as to the destruction of derelicts?

MR. BRYCE: That question had better be addressed to the Foreign Office.

NEW MEMBER SWORN.

Thomas George Fardell, esquire, for the Borough of Paddington, South Division.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO HER MAJESTY'S MOST GRACIOUS SPEECH.

MOTION FOR ADDRESS. ADJOURNED DEBATE.

[Order read for resuming Adjourned Debate on Main Question, 5th February, see page 15.]

Debate resumed.

MR. J. REDMOND (Waterford), in rising to move, as an Amendment to the Address, to add—

> "And we humbly represent to Your Majesty that the time has arrived when it is the duty of Your Majesty's Ministers to advise Your Majesty to dissolve the present Parliament and submit the question of Home Rule to the electors of the United Kingdom,"

said,—Mr. Speaker, in explaining the reasons which have induced me to move the Amendment which stands in my name, I shall be forced to ask the indulgence of the House while I go back to some extent upon the recent history of the Home Rule question and while I recall to the attention of this House the commanding position of pre-eminence and urgency to which this question was raised by the late Mr. Parnell; and it will be necessary for me briefly to consider the position in which this question admittedly, confessedly, stands at the present moment. In the year 1886 the Home Rule question, which up to that time had been denounced, derided, and repudiated by every political Party in this House, suddenly became the foremost in the policy of the Empire, A great English political Party accepted the policy of Home Rule; a great English Government staked its existence on the policy of Home Rule, and although that English Party, as a result, was divided in its own ranks and defeated, and although that Government was, as the immediate result of adopting the policy of Home Rule, wrecked, still the Home Rule question remained the foremost political question of the day. It absorbed public opinion in this country; it was the one topic discussed upon every platform throughout the length and breadth of Great Britain; it was the one political topic which engrossed the attention of the Press of the United Kingdom, and not merely of the United Kingdom, but, I might almost with truth say, of Europe; and every bye-election that was fought was fought on this question of Home Rule. More than that, every triumph which the Liberal Party won at the polls, from the year 1886 down to the destruction of Mr. Parnell's power as Leader of a united Party in this House, was won by the Liberal Party on the question of Home Rule. It was, Sir, the one great plank in the Liberal platform, and British people were told that all questions of merely British concern, all questions of domestic reform, should be put upon one side until the Irish question was settled. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian informed the people of Great Britain that Ireland blocked the way, that Ireland was mistress of the political situation, and that she would remain mistress of it until this Irish question had been settled; and in the most solemn tones again and again the right hon. Gentleman told the people of Great Britain that everything else must wait until the Irish question was solved. He told them that this Irish problem was urgent from the Irish point of view, because social peace and order could not be preserved in Ireland without its settlement; and he said it was urgent from the British point of view, because no British reform, now matter how just, and no matter how much it was demanded by the British people, could even be considered, much less settled, until the Irish question was out of the way. Mr. Speaker, it is scarcely necessary to fortify myself by extracts from the speeches of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian to establish the first position that I take up, but I will just read two or three words to show that I am not overstating the case. On April 13th, 1886, the right hon. Gentleman stated in the House of Commons—

> "As the plan holds the field so the subject holds the field. Never, I think, have I witnessed such signs of public absorption in this House and out of it. Moreover, it is safe to prophesy that the subject will continue to hold the field. Many are here who advocate important reforms. Many think, and I am one of them, that legislation is in arrear. But you may dismiss all these subjects from your mind until this matter is disposed of, until this Irish problem is solved. I am looking at the nature of the case. I am looking at the profound interest of the whole English and Scotch people, aye, and of the whole civilised world. Until this problem is solved, it is idle to think of making progress with the business of this country."

And on June 21 in the same year he said—

> "I will illustrate what the position is. It may be briefly stated in one word—'Ireland blocks the way.'"

And then he went on to say—

> "People have the audacity to reproach me with not endeavouring to force upon Parliament —to force upon them by effort which would be absolutely vain—the consideration of other subjects of legislation when I told them that this Irish question would sweep into the shade the whole of that legislation, and you would hear no more of it until this business was settled."

In June again, Sir, later on, the right hon. Gentleman said—

> "Your Parliament is in a state of paralysis. It has worked hard. Many a man has sacrificed his life to his public labours, but the difficulties cannot be overcome. And what is the cause of these difficulties? The cause of them has been Ireland. The Irish question is in a position in which every man knows no work can be done until the question is got out of the way."

I might multiply those extracts indefinitely, but I think no one will question the position which I take up when I say that the policy laid down by the right hon. Gentleman, and accepted by the entire Liberal Party in 1886, was, that Ireland blocked the way, and that this Irish question was so vast, and so urgent, and so pressing, that it should be settled before any attempt could fairly be made with domestic reforms or English legislation. Sir, that was the position to which the Home Rule question was raised by the genius and the labours of the late Mr. Parnell; and, Sir, that was the position in which it remained until his power as the Leader of a united Party in this House and in Ireland was destroyed. But the policy enunciated in the cry that Ireland blocks the way has absolutely disappeared; its place has been taken by a feeble cry that the cup of the Lords should be filled up. This Parliament has been sitting for over two years; it has been engaged every day since the rejection of the Home Rule Bill in giving the lie, as far as it is possible to give it, to the cry that Ireland blocks the way. What has been the history of the last two years of this Parliament? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, speaking on this question said—

> "I do not think in the history of our legislation for the last 20 years you can find any Parliament in which more has been done—that is, as to the importance of the Bills which it has passed."

Yes, but has that work, so far as it consisted in passing Bills into law, been work done in the interests of Ireland? This Parliament has passed Bills into law conferring Parish Councils upon England, Scotland, and Wales; it has dealt with the Equalisation of Rates in London; it has passed a democratic Budget. What has it done for Ireland? [Mr. SNAPE: "It has passed Home Rule."] I only wished that it had. It did not pass Home Rule, and when a Home Rule Bill, having passed through this House, was rejected in another place, it was quietly put upon the shelf, and from that day to this we have heard nothing about it. I will tell the House the one thing that this Parliament has done for Ireland. Last Session it increased the taxation of Ireland by making Ireland pay towards the deficit in the Budget of last year a sum which represents more than double the proportion which Ministers themselves admitted was her fair proportion towards the Imperial taxation. I was interested in reading to-day a leading article in what I suppose may be called the organ of the Government, the *Daily News*, in which they state that another election on the question of Home Rule is no longer within the range of practical politics. We are told that the next election is not to be held on the question of Home Rule, but that there is to be interposed between the electors and the consideration of the Home Rule question another question, a vaster and greater question from the English point of view, even than Home Rule — the question which has been described by the Prime Minister as the greatest constitutional question which the people of Great Britain have had to consider for over 200 years. There has come within the last three years an extraordinary change over the position of the Home Rule question in Great Britain. There has been a slow and gradual, but a steady, change of policy and attitude towards the Home Rule question on the part of the Liberal Party and of the present Government. That change has no doubt been a gradual one in its stages; it has been almost imperceptible, but at the end of three years that change is patent to the naked eye. In that change there were seven distinct stages. The first of these was when in the year 1891 the Newcastle Programme was adopted as the policy of the Liberal Party. Sir, up to that time Home Rule had been the sole great issue before the people of Great Britain. So far from saying that other measures should go abreast of Home Rule, as I have shown, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian, and his Party declared that all other measures sank into insignificance as compared with Home Rule and could not be touched by the Parliament of England until that greater question was settled. But the Newcastle Programme changed all that; Home Rule was declared, no doubt, to be still the first item in the Programme, but it was declared to be one item only in a vast programme of reform; and in the words of one of the Newcastle delegates, the way to get it passed was to sandwich it in between other measures. In my view that constituted a complete reversal of the policy of "Ireland blocks the way." The second stage in this change of policy was, when the Leaders of the Liberal Party refused to disclose to the country the general outline of the Home Rule Bill of 1893 before the Election. Nobody asked for the details; what was asked for was, that the electors before the Election should be put in possession of the main outlines of the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, in a famous speech made at Leeds before the Election, said:—

> "If they went to the country with a vague formula calling it Home Rule, or whatever they pleased, and obtained a majority on behalf of that formula, what would be their position when they went back to Westminster and introduced a Bill? It might be the wisest and best scheme, but the position would tell them that that was not the issue the country had voted upon. You have no mandate for the introduction of that measure, and we are justified in forcing the Government to take it back to the constituents."

Many of those who were amongst the most enthusiastic supporters of the Government and of the Liberal Party in Ireland spoke in precisely the same way. In November 1890, Mr. Michael Davitt wrote in the *Nineteenth Century* as follows:—

> "On this Irish Question there is no satisfactory response to the growing anxiety as to what the next Home Rule scheme is to be, and both friends and foes alike are in the dark as to whether the next General Election is to be fought on a distinct and definite Home Rule proposal, or on the name and fame of Mr. Gladstone. Mr. Gladstone's reticence on this point may be defended by politicians. This would be all very well if the masses were as ignorant or as indifferent as they were 20 years ago, but such is not the case."

Now, Mr. Speaker, just as the adoption of the Newcastle programme, in my view, made it certain that if the Home Rule Bill were passed in this House and rejected in the Lords, the Government would hang it up and go on with the rest of the programme, so in my opinion the refusal to satisfy the demand made by the Home Secretary and others made it certain that the Home Rule Bill would be rejected by the Upper Chamber. Now, I come to the third stage in the change of policy on the part of the Liberal Party. It was reached in an acute form when the Home Rule Bill was rejected by the House of Lords. What occurred? This was a great measure, and it had been described by the Prime Minister and by his colleagues as of overpowering importance and urgency. It was a measure, we were told, upon which the interest of the United Kingdom and the welfare and integrity of the Empire depended. It was a measure at the back of which the great heart of the masses of the people was to be found in enthusiastic support, and this measure, sent up by a large majority from this House to the Lords, was rejected. What happened? Was Parliament dissolved? Was Parliament summoned immediately to repass the Bill, and send it up to the Lords? No. Was an agitation started in the country to protest against the action of the House of Lords? None of these were done, but the question of this great reform, which, it had been said, would have to be settled before anything practical could be done for the people of Great Britain, was quietly put upon the shelf, and the Government turned with an easy conscience to the consideration of those other matters which Mr. Gladstone had stated sank into absolute insignificance as compared with Home Rule. I want to know where in the annals of this Parliament anything similar is to be found in reference to the passage of any great measure of reform on which the hearts of the people were set? [*Cheers and Laughter.*] I invite hon. Members who laugh and doubt what I say to search through the annals of this Parliament for the last 100 years and to find a parallel for such treatment being given to any measure described as this measure has been described. Let them go back over the great measures of reform of the century. Was it in this spirit and in this half-hearted way that the action of the House of Lords in reference to the Reform Bill of 1831 was met? No! Was that great measure, when the House of Lords rejected it, put upon the shelf, and were there other and less important measures taken up for the consideration of Parliament? Was it by half-hearted action of that kind that Catholic Emancipation was passed, that the Corn Laws were repealed, and that the Paper Duties were abolished? Was it by action of that kind that the Government in 1884 passed their Franchise Act? No! In 1884 the House of Lords took action which amounted practically to a rejection of the measure. Was the measure then hung up? Did the House of Commons go on quietly with the consideration of other Bills? No! We know that all England was made to ring with protests against the action of the House of Lords, and it was announced that Parliament would be assembled in the Autumn to pass another Bill, to send it up to the Lords, and to insist on its passing. But in the case of the Home Rule Bill none of these things occurred, and in my view this shelving of the Home Rule Bill, after its rejection by the Lords, must have meant to the minds of the British people that it was no longer an urgent measure, and might with safety be put into the same rank with the questions of Local Veto or Triennial Parliaments, to be dealt with at some time or other in the dim and distant future, but not to be allowed to interfere for an instant with the smooth course of practical and humdrum British legislation. The next stage in the change of policy was easily detected in the altered tone at English elections. It is quite true that at all these elections Home Rule appeared in the candidates' addresses. It was still at the head of the Newcastle Programme, and no doubt every candidate in his opening speech declared that he was in favour of Home Rule. But I shall not be contradicted when I say that in recent time little has been heard of Home Rule at English elections, while much has been heard of the other items of the Newcastle Programme. How much was heard of Home Rule at Forfar or Brigg? When English elections were fought on Home Rule, and Home Rule alone, the Liberal Party won them, but since they have taken to dwell more on Disestablishment, Local Veto, and other questions, upon which their own Party are divided, they have been losing election after election. [*Cheers and Laughter.*] Do hon. Members who laugh doubt what I say? If they do, I can give them a very interesting specimen of what I mean. There was a recent election at Birkenhead, and the Liberal candidate there was a very candid gentleman. He said at one of his meetings that they had had a great number of red herrings drawn across the trail by the Conservatives, and the first of these was Home Rule, and he asked what Home Rule had then to do with that election? There were many other qcestions, he said, which had to do with the election. That seems to me to be a very sorry plight for the prospects of Home Rule at the present moment. The fourth stage of the decline of policy on this question by the Liberal Party is to be found in the practical disappearance of the question on British platforms. I now come to one of the most serious facts in the situation—the disappearance from the scene of the late Prime Minister.

It is perfectly clear that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian, after the defeat of the Home Rule Bill of 1893, did not contemplate putting the question upon the shelf, and taking no action upon it to resent the course pursued by the Lords, because immediately afterwards he spoke at Edinburgh, and said that the next Session of Parliament would not pass over without their seeing this subject reappear above the waves beneath which it had for the moment sunk. That clearly pointed to some action on his part to keep Home Rule to the front, and that he, at any rate, was not in favour of delaying the question. One of the most powerful arguments used for the destruction of the power of Mr. Parnell, as Leader of the Independent Party in Ireland, was that his disappearance was necessary in order to preserve the advocacy of Home Rule by Mr. Gladstone. To-day our country is in the miserable position of seeing Home Rule indefinitely postponed, and of finding herself deprived of the services of the right hon. Member for Midlothian, as well as the services of the late Mr. Parnell. The sixth stage in the decline of Liberal Policy was reached when Lord Rosebery made his first speech as Prime Minister. That speech contained the extraordinary doctrine that Home Rule could not be carried into law unless and until it had at its back a majority of the people of England. Yet the *Daily News* declares that Home Rule is not now within the range of practical politics. So far from declaring that the Home Rule question is urgent, and that he would push it on, the present Prime Minister has done exactly the opposite; and, so far from contesting the action of the House of Lords, he has, by the extraordinary argument he has used, justified their action in the rejection of that Bill. I assert that the Prime Minister, from that day to this, has never made one straightforward and clear declaration that in his opinion Home Rule—that is, Home Rule as we were given to understand it last year—is still a cardinal point in his policy; that he is determined, in opposition to any influence in the Lords or out of it, to push that policy to success. But the last stage in this downward course is the most serious of all, and it is to be found in the Bradford speech of the Prime Minister, in which he declared that the next election was not to be held on the subject of Home Rule at all. No. He declared that, between the electors and the consideration of this great question, there was to be interposed another question—from the English point of view a far graver and more wide-reaching question, and one which he himself described, as I have pointed out, as the greatest question for the last 200 years. In my view, the starting of this House-of-Lords agitation means, if it is persisted in, the indefinite postponement of Home Rule. I do not take the view that it is impossible to pass Home Rule through the House of Lords as it is at present constituted. I know from the history of the House of Lords that it is the weakest Second Chamber, perhaps, in the world For my part, I think the whole history of the House of Lords shows that it has no power permanently to withstand the declared will of the people in favour of any great reform. It has never done so. I quite admit that it has interposed obstacles; it has been an influence thwarting and hindering the progress of useful Radical legislation; but when it came to the point the House of Lords never yet attempted to assert its power in opposition to the clear declaration of the will of the people. And on this question of Home Rule, just as on every other reform of the century, I believe that a clear declaration of the public will in its favour would mean the passage of the Bill through the House of Lords. Indeed, Lord Salisbury has himself admitted that such a declaration would be sufficient to warrant the House of Lords in passing the Bill. But it is not necessary for me to cite him as a witness. The whole history of the House of Lords supports my assertion that in these circumstances it could not interpose a permanent and effective barrier to the passage of the measure. But for Home Rule to wait for either the abolition or the reform of the House of Lords is a very different matter. Home Rule is a great question. I do not think its magnitude was exaggerated by the late Prime Minister. It is a great question, but I admit that from the point of view of the people of Great Britain, at any rate, this question of the House of Lords is a greater question; and whatever way this question of the House of Lords comes to be dealt with in the end, no sane man can seriously believe that it can be settled without years and years passing, without Parliaments—many Parliaments, perhaps—being dissolved and many Governments coming into office and going out again. On the merits of this House-of-Lords question this is not the time to enter, and it is not my business on the present occasion to deal with them. But when we are asked to postpone Home Rule until the House of Lords is abolished or reformed, I am justified in pointing to the fact that you yourselves are not united on this question of the House of Lords, And if you were united in your demands with reference to the House of Lords, if you had at your back a great wave of popular enthusiasm such as carried other reforms of the century; if you were led by some great man who would inspire enthusiasm amongst the masses; even then, I say, it would take years and years, dissolutions coming and going, and Parliaments disappearing, before the question could be settled. But is that the case now? Have you a great man at your head capable of inspiring enthusiasm amongst the masses of the people? Have you at your back a great man of enthusiasm; and, above all, are you united? Do you know your own minds upon it? Why, the Prime Minister declares himself in favour of a reformed Second Chamber. The Home Secretary, as I understand, and a large number of the members of the Party declare themselves in favour of one Chamber. [Mr. ASQUITH dissented.] Then the right hon. Gentleman has been mis-reported, and I will not attempt to press it upon him, but undoubtedly a large section of the Liberal Party are in favour of the total abolition of the House of Lords, and in favour of having only one Chamber. On the merits of these two proposals it is not my business to enter. So far as Ireland is concerned, I said, in the discussion on the Home Rule Bill, that I was in favour of a Second Chamber for Ireland; but in the question of a Second Chamber for England I can understand the position of those Radicals who are in favour of a single Chamber and the total abolition of the Lords, because while the Lords cannot permanently withstand the popular will, it is true that they can delay the realisation of the wishes of the people, and hamper and impede the progress of Radical legislation. Therefore the policy of the hon. Member for Northampton and many other Members of this House—that is, the total abolition of the House of Lords, is to my mind a perfectly reasonable and intelligent policy for English Radicals. But I confess I cannot understand English Radicals who want a reform of the Second Chamber, because the whole experience of the world shows that the very moment you reform a Second Chamber by introducing the elective element into it, or in any other similar way, that very moment you increase its moral force and power, and thereby increase enormously the power of the House of Lords to withstand the progress of your Radical Programme. At the present moment I believe the House of Lords is the weakest Second Chamber in the world. But if Lord Rosebery had his way; if he reformed the constitution of the House of Lords and made it to some extent representative, and introduced other elements into it; I believe its power to withstand Radical legislation would be enormously increased. For my part, I have always regarded a reformed House of Lords of Lords as a question of the future; but I have regarded it, I must candidly say, as a part of Conservative rather than of Radical policy. My firm belief is, that the House of Lords eventually will be reformed, but that it will be reformed by Conservatives and in the interests of the Conservative Party. But one thing to my mind is absolutely certain, and that is, that if Home Rule is to be postponed until the agitation against the House of Lords which was started in the Bradford speech be galvanised into life and succeeds, few indeed of us who are assembled in this Parliament can hope to see a Parliament established in Dublin. A more extraordinary proceeding than the starting of that agitation at Bradford I never heard of. Lord Rosebery went to Bradford and made a valiant speech, and from that day to this he has been engaged in making speeches minimising the effect of his first speech and explaining that he really did not mean to touch the House of Lords at all. It reminds me of the famous historical cartoon that appeared of the late Lord John Russell, in connection, I think, with the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, when he was represented as a street urchin chalking up on a street wall "No Popery," and running away again. For all the world it seems to me that is the attitude taken up on this question by Lord Rosebery. From our point of view, all I have got to say is if we are to be asked to wait until this agitation, which seems already to have died of inanition, be galvanised again into life, and until it succeeds in its object, we will have to wait, I am afraid, longer than any of us hoped a few years ago, or can view with any equanimity now. I have endeavoured to show as briefly as I can the perilous condition in which, in my opinion, the Home Rule movement stands at this moment in Great Britain; I have endeavoured to show that it has fallen absolutely away from the commanding position to which it was raised by the genius of the late Mr. Parnell; and I now declare my opinion that it is the duty of Ministers, by dissolving the present Parliament, to do what they can to restore that question to the position that it occupied. Home Rule must be kept to the front. It must be still made, in my opinion, to block the way. It must, in my opinion, still remain the great question on which Governments will fall and Parliaments will be dissolved. In this case I believe a state of suspended animation is almost as bad as death, and may lead to death; and I believe that the first step necessary to restore Home Rule to the position which it occupied three years ago is once more to appeal upon it to the electors of the United Kingdom, who, after all, are the masters of Lords and Commons alike. Before I conclude let me briefly deal with just one or two of the more specious of the arguments of those who are opposed to the dissolution of Parliament. It is said that when the dissolution takes place Home Rule might be defeated at the polls. Well, how do you propose to avoid defeat? You propose to avoid defeat by running away. You propose to avoid defeat by saying that the next election will not be held upon Home Rule at all. If that does not mean the practical abandonment of Home Rule I do not know what it means. Let me take an example. A General Election was held after the rejection of the Home Rule Bill of 1886, and Home Rule was defeated at the polls. Does anybody mean to pretend that if the right hon. Gentleman, the Member for Midlothian, instead of appealing to the electors on Home Rule in 1886, had hung it up and gone on with British reforms that it would have been for the benefit of the cause of Home Rule? Why, we know that the defeat of Home Rule at the polls did not injure the cause of Home Rule in Great Britain. We know that it was followed by election after election where Home Rulers were returned, and that the campaign set on foot in the country after that General Election and that defeat resulted in the return of a Home Rule majority to this House. The fact of the matter is it come to this —either this is an urgent question and the Liberal Party are in earnest about it, or it is not an urgent question and you are not in earnest about it. I hold that it is plainly your duty to keep the question to the front, and to appeal upon it to the electors again and again, whether that appeal results in the defeat of one Government or of ten Governments. But it is said that the only chance of victory for Home Rule at the polls was to accompany Home Rule with other measures. That is the sandwiching policy advocated in the Newcastle Programme. Now, I have never been able to convince myself that that is a wise or practical policy. Home Rule is to great a question to be juggled with. Home Rule is too great a question to be smuggled into law, and it will be absolutely necessary, if it is to pass into law, that there should be a fair and square issue taken on that point, and on that issue the people should decide. But there is another argument, which is more intended for Ireland than for this House, for after all most of the Members of this House are practical politicians, and that argument is that this Parliament should be continued and the life of the Government prolonged in order to obtain certain legislative benefits for Ireland. Now, my first answer to that is that Ireland has reaped no legislative benefits at present from this Government—absolutely none, and my second answer is, that no responsible man can pledge his opinion that any really useful legislation for Ireland can be passed by this Parliament. I will again cite the Home Secretary, who is candid, perhaps too candid for his friends. Speaking at Birmingham in November last as to the chances of legislation passing in this Session, he fell into sporting phraseology, and he asserted his opinion that the odds against the Irish Bill passing into law were 100 to 1. The right hon. Gentleman and the Chief Secretary for Ireland spoke together the other day on the same platform at Newcastle, and I was anxious to see whether the sporting price had changed. But while the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary gave a glowing account of his Bill, he refrained from saying that in his belief that Bill would pass into law, and the Home Secretary did not say anything to encourage the idea, so I suppose the same price holds good. The fact of the matter is that this Government are absolutely impotent to pass any useful legislation whatever for Ireland, and over and above all these arguments, it is my opinion that the longer this Government remains in Office the less chance there will be of winning a victory at the polls, and I believe that is the view of many hon. Members on that side of the House who will vote against me. This Home Rule question was brought to the front by making it block the way of British reform. It was forced on the Liberal Party by the necessity of the situation in which they found themselves placed by the political genius of Mr. Parnell. If this block be removed, if the situation be eased, if the electors of Great Britain find it a pleasant and a safe process to put Home Rule on the shelf, then I believe the chances of Home Rule passing into law in this generation will be very small indeed, In conclusion, I say that this policy of indefinitely postponing the General Election, coupled with the declaration that this General Election is not to be held upon the issue of Home Rule at all, and with the interposition between the electors and Home Rule of a still greater constitutional question, amounts to a complete reversal of the policy of the Liberal Party towards Ireland in the past. By this Amendment I call upon the Government tonight, in fulfilment of their pledges in the past, to restore Home Rule to the position it held before the late Mr. Parnell died, and to make it the chief legislative issue in the country, by dissolving Parliament and submitting it once more to the electors. I beg to move the Amendment which stands in my name. (Cheers.)

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne) : I am very sensible of the importance and significance of the occasion on which I rise to oppose the Amendment moved by the hon. and learned Member. I profess, and I am sure the hon. Member will agree with me sincerely—I profess to be as much in earnest about the good government of Ireland as he would claim for himself to be. This is, therefore, an occasion of some significance, and I make bold to say that no more mischievous blow has been struck at the cause of Home Rule than this Amendment. Sir, the hon. Member was cheered in various parts of his speech by gentlemen sitting above the Gangway opposite. I do not grudge them at all the irresponsible enjoyment they exhibited on this occasion—temporarily irresponsible. The hon. and learned Member's arguments are really less important and less interesting than the fact that he brought forward a Motion which those arguments are used to support. I really do not feel called upon, in connection with this Amendment, to discuss that portion of the hon. Member's speech which was taken up with an exposition of his own views as to the direction in which the House of Lords should be reformed. I take it that that would more properly come forward, if it came forward at all, on the occasion of the Amendment of my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham. The hon. Member's division of the stages through which the Home Rule question has passed during the last eight or nine years was a very curious one, and not a very novel one. I was struck by this—that he enumerated four or five stages in which he thought that the Home Rule question had been deliberately damaged, and then he came to an event which nobody deplores more bitterly than we on this Bench do—the disappearance from the leadership of the most illustrious Member of this House. But my right hon. Friend the Member for Midlothian was the Leader of the Party during the time when all those various downward stages enumerated by the hon. Member were passed through. He says that Home

Rule was placed in the front of the Newcastle programme, but that the design of that programme was in effect to postpone Home Rule and to sandwich Home Rule amongst English measures. That was well known to him and his friends. It was well known to the country that we were going to the country, not upon one single issue during the election of 1892, but during that election it was well known that the Home Rule question was in the forefront, that it was the first question with which we had to deal. That is a pledge which we have amply fulfilled. It has often been said that Ireland is like a fever-stricken patient, who tosses first on one side and then on the other to seek relief. I do not believe any responsible Irishman ever before put himself or his country in such a posture as the hon. Member has placed himself in to-night. I ask gentlemen in all quarters of the House to mark this. If they look at the position of the hon. Member they will see that he has committed himself a political paradox of very considerable dimensions. Here is a Government in power which has passed a Home Rule Bill through the House of Commons. Let the hon. and learned Member carry his memory back to 10 years ago. Would any man—would any Irishman, or any Englishman—then have dreamed that within 10 years a Government would have been in a position to have achieved such a feat as that? Then I come to the next paradox, that this Government, which has gone so far, which has taken these enormous strides in the direction desired by the hon. Member—that this Government is to be ejected by the friends of Home Rule and in the name of Home Rule. How is it to be ejected? The hon. Gentleman wishes to eject this Government by the aid of the Party which regards Home Rule as treason to the Constitution and the dismemberment of the Empire; has declared that the passing of such a measure would be a justification in some parts of the United Kingdom of civil war. Has the hon. and learned Member asked himself whom his Motion will please? Does he not know that all those gentlemen who sit above the Gangway opposite, and who delight (I am afraid I must say it) in cynical and ill-natured views of the conduct of Irishmen and the prospects of Ireland—[*Opposition cries of* "No, no," *and cheers*]—does he not know that these are the gentlemen who will view this Motion with favour? I should like to point out one or two very extraordinary feotures in a paradoxical direction in the Motion of the hon. Member. On Friday last he went into the Lobby to vote that the greatest attention of Parliament and of the Government and the country ought to be given to agricultural distress, to the unemployed, and to social questions, and not to constitutional questions. To-day the ruined farmer and the unemployed are to be thrown overboard, and he calls upon the Government to break up Parliament in the midst of its work, in order that the attention of the electors may be concentrated, not upon the condition of the farmers and the unemployed, but upon a constitutional question. To-morrow or the next day another constitutional question is to be forced to the forefront by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham—that is, the question of the House of Lords. There, again, the hon. Member is going, I presume, in pursuance of this same suicidal and infatuated policy to vote against the Government. Now, I should like to say a word or two as to his confederates. I understand Lord Salisbury taxed us the other day with sweeping up a majority from the refuse of the electors. The refuse he charged us with sweeping up are electors of Scotland and Wales. Is there no other sweeping up going on at present? Here are the landlord Party doctoring their Amendment in order to capture the representatives of the no-rent Party; and to-day the Liberal Unionists below the Gangway are going to join hands with those who alone, according to their own version, possess the pure milk of the word in the matter of Home Rule. I wonder whether the right hon. Member for Manchester has had any share in doctoring this Amendment.

MR. J. REDMOND: I can answer that question; and in answering it let me state that the paragraph which appeared lately in some Liberal newspapers to the effect that I had changed the original Amendment is absolutely untrue. Nobody has doctored this Amendment. The Amnesty Amendment which my hon. Friend is going to move is in the terms in which it has always been moved, and in which it was drafted by Mr. Parnell. This Amendment was drafted before I came to London at all.

MR. J. MORLEY: I accept entirely the assurance of the hon. and learned Member; but there are more ways than one of doctoring an Amendment. I do not deny what the hon. and learned Gentleman has said. I do not say for a single moment that the right hon. Gentleman has had any share in the wording of this Amendment; but, no doubt, in framing it the hon. and learned Gentleman had in view language which would commend itself to Gentlemen above the Gangway. The hon. and learned Member says quite truly there is on the paper an Amendment in favour of an amnesty. Are your confederates above the Gangway going to vote for an amnesty?

MR. J. E. REDMOND: Are you going to grant it?

MR. J. MORLEY: My answer I gave to friends of his in Ireland not long ago. Following this historic Amendment, there is another in favour of a Maamtrasna inquiry. Have you arranged about that, as you arranged in 1885, with gentlemen above the Gangway?

MR. T. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour): I must tell the right hon. Gentleman that, so far as I am concerned, there was no arrangement in 1885, and there is no arrangement now. The Amendment stands upon the justice of the case, and the decision of the House will be taken upon that.

MR. J. MORLEY: I do not want to argue the justice of the case now; I am quite prepared to do it at the proper time. I remember that when, in 1885, the gentlemen who had for two or three years jeered at Lord Spencer for not being sufficiently energetic came into office, as everybody supposed in consequence of the understanding arrived at, there was a most astonishing change of front on their part. The change was so astonishing that it shocked nobody more than my right hon. Friend the Member for St. George's, Hanover Square; the change was so remarkable that it was described by the hon and learned Member for Waterford as marking a break of continuity in Irish policy. I would warn gentlemen above the Gangway to beware lest they find themselves victims of the same historic pranks as they played in 1885. Have your confederates agreed to send to Ireland a Lord Lieutenant who shall confer with the hon. and learned Member on the possibility of setting up a Parliament in Ireland? One would like to know these things. There is nothing bitter or uncharitable in asking the question of hon. Gentlemen opposite, for this is the very thing which was done in 1885. One more question. The hon. and learned Member moved the Closure on the Bill of last Session for the repeal of the Crimes Act, and the Second Reading of that Bill was carried. Is he going to lead into the Lobby the Leader who told the House of Commons last year that the advent of a Unionist Government to power would be the signal for the revival of the old problems and the old difficulties and for the necessary resort to coercion? The words are so remarkable in view of the effect which the hon. and learned Gentleman desires to procure by his Amendment that I will take the liberty of reminding the House of them. The Leader of the Opposition said—

> "Is it not unreasonable, intolerable, to ask us to abandon the method of enforcing the common law of this country—"

that of the Crimes Act—

> "Which is, by the admission of the advocates of the present Bill, will become necessary as soon as Irish patriots see the prospect of Home Rule receding into space?"

The hon. and learned Member has told us that the prospect does seem to be receding into space. The right hon. Gentleman went on to say—

> "I am certain that must come sooner or later, and then we shall find ourselves face to face with that problem and difficulty and without the present method of meeting them as they arise."

The methods to which he was referring were those of the Coercion Act. With all this political paradox, the position of the hon. Member is not to be concealed or disguised by that Parliamentary plausibility of which he is such a distinguished example. A word as to the general position af the hon. Member. He represents himself as an advocate of the policy of independence. Well, Sir, independence is a very fine thing, and an Independent Party may be a very fine thing; but independence in itself is not a policy. What is the calculation of the hon. and learned Member as to the effect of this Amendment? What does he anticipate will be its effect either in Ireland or in Great Britain? I make great allowance for desperate Party necessities; they are overmastering elements; but, after all, they ought not to overmaster cool and sober calculation. [Mr. W. REDMOND: What about your own Party necessities?] Certainly the statesman to whose name the hon. and learned Member is fond of appealing, Mr. Parnell—[Mr. W. REDMOND: The man you killed]—would have been the last man to have embarked on such an Amendment without making a very cool and sober calculation as to what its effect must be. According to the hon. and learned Member, the Government is bound to devote itself wholly and exclusively to Home Rule, without regard to any other object, or policy, or cause whatsoever, and without regard, moreover, to the effect which attention to other demands besides Irish demands would have on the promotion of the Irish cause itself, even although legislative activity in other fields, such as Local Government in English and Scotch counties, the financial system of the United Kingdom, and Temperance, should be not only wise in itself, but should put the Government in a still stronger position in taking up Home Rule again. Does the hon. and learned Member seriously contend that we should have done better by the Irish cause, in the minds of the English and Scotch and Welsh electorate, if we had told them we were indifferent to all other social necessities and demands, and if we had made no effort to satisfy them? I put that question to the hon. Member, and I do not think he can answer it. I put two plain questions: Do you think we can carry Home Rule against that English, Welsh, and Scotch electorate? Do you think you conciliate English, Scotch, and Welsh Liberals by trying to defeat and turn out a Liberal Government? Take the case of Wales. There are some 31 or 32 Representatives from Wales who are in favour of the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales; but every one of those Members voted for Home Rule. They voted for Home Rule in the same spirit that hon. Gentlemen opposite voted against it; and hon. Gentlemen opposite are bound to give to gentlemen from Wales credit for the same Parliamentary integrity as they claim for themselves. They voted for Home Rule because they believed, wisely or unwisely, that it would be a good system of government for Ireland. The effect of what the hon. Member for Waterford wishes to do would be to baulk the national desire represented by those gentlemen, and to hinder the prosecution of a measure on which they had set their hearts. That is a policy of independence indeed; it is independence of gratitude, independence of common sense. The hon. and learned Member says the Disestablishment Bill will not pass. I do not know whether it will or not; but after a very remarkable and interesting letter written by the right hon. Member for West Birmingham, I do not know what astonishing and unexpected combinations may happen. At any rate, it is not for any who wish to remain good friends with the Representatives of Welsh public opinion to take for granted that this is a mere parade of a measure that is not intended to pass. Or interest in the Irish question has been thoroughly roused during the last eight or nine years. It has been roused in my own constituency, and the interest remains great to this moment. But those who voted for me at Newcastle in 1892, on the strength of my accepting Office to be instrumental in carrying out a certain course of policy towards Ireland, are also interested in other questions which we propose to deal with by legislation this Session. Does the hon. and learned Member think he is doing a good turn to the Irish cause in the minds of men like those when he takes up the attitude he does? The hon. and learned Member talked about Home Rule being "shelved," and he referred especially to the Prime Minister. I cannot find a single word uttered by the Prime Minister since he first occupied that great Office which justifies the construction he chooses to put on the Prime Minister's words. Take Lord Rosebery's speech in another place on Tuesday night last. Speaking of the diminution of crime he says—

> "I believe the reduction of crime is due in Ireland to another cause—the knowledge that the policy of establishing an Irish Legislature for distinctively Irish concerns, satisfying the just aspirations of Irish people consistently with Imperial unity, remains in the forefront of the Liberal Programme."

Does the hon. and learned Member suppose that Lord Rosebery is capable of making in his place in Parliament, under the most solemn circumstances under which any Minister can speak, a declaration of that kind not meaning to carry it out, not meaning that the policy is a wise policy, or intending to do what he can to press it forward at a speed which any question in the forefront of the Liberal Programme ought to command? I will tell the hon. and learned Member what my view is of what he has described as the slackening of energy and interest in the Irish cause. From 1886 and onwards until 1892 there was a passionate awakening of the national conscience in respect of Ireland due to those treasures of genius, eloquence, and enthusiasm which were poured by my right hon. Friend the Member for Midlothian into the most heroic task of all his heroic life. That passionate awakening has been transformed into firm and steadfast conviction of national honour and dignity. I do not regret that. I am glad the stage has been reached when we discuss this question without passion from the point of view of sober and steadfast conviction; because the ground of a reason and conviction of that kind is stronger than the ground of passion alone, and I repeat that, in my judgment, frankly stated to the House, this firm conviction of the impossibility of governing Ireland on the old lines, the necessity of regenerating the national character in Ireland and building institutions in Ireland up by self-government, has not one whit slackened or weakened. But—I do not know one need be ashamed to remark—human nature is human nature after all, and demands that friendship shall be met by friendship; and I say once more frankly and plainly to the hon. and learned Member that, if the electors of this country were so misguided as to take him—I do not wish to speak with any discourtesy—as a representative of Irish judgment, I think the cause of Home Rule would, as he says, be set back for a very indefinite time. I said I would say something of the effect of the hon. Member's attitude as regards his own country. He says no responsible man will pledge himself that our Irish Land Bill will become law. I quite agree—especially that rather capricious body whom the hon. and learned Member is doing his best to strengthen; but I fancy my right hon. Friend behind me himself now thinks that the odds offered at Birmingham ought to be what is technically called "shortened." A remarkable speech was made in the House of Lords the other night by the Leader of the Unionist Party. The Duke of Devonshire said he quite admitted that—

> "there are some proposals which the Government are fully entitled to consider necessary and practical subjects of legislation. There is the measure dealing with the subject of Irish Land. That is a subject upon which it is quite possible Parliament might be called upon to legislate successfully. It is admitted by all that the time approaches for the expiration of the first period for which judicial rents were fixed, and some revision of the existing law would be found necessary, and I have not the smallest doubt that in this House, as well as in the House of Commons, every disposition will be felt to approach the consideration of this question and of any new principle which it may be found necessary to adopt for the settlement of the relations between landlord and tenant in Ireland. I am sure any proposals of the Government on that subject will be met in a perfectly fair and temperate spirit."

Sir, I am sure the Duke of Devonshire would not have made a declaration of that kind without consultation with my right hon. Friend, and I say it is most premature for the hon. and learned Member to suppose there is no chance whatever of our proposals in respect of Irish Land becoming law. I have pointed out that his attitude towards English, Scotch, and Welsh electors is extraordinary, but I wonder what his own countrymen will say? The hon. Member must know that the demand for a Bill on such lines, as it is probable that the measure to be introduced by us in a few days will be framed upon, is universally demanded in Ireland, not merely—as the hon. Member for South Tyrone, a formidable and distinguished opponent of the Government, could bear me out—by the Protestant north, but in the south and west there is a strong overmastering feeling in favour of passing such proposals as we shall introduce. The hon. Member does not deny that? But what is his action? On Friday night he gives a vote full of sympathy and interest in the farmers of Great Britain, and yet to-night he comes down to this House and asks this House to turn out the Government, as soon as it possibly can, which is going to bring in proposals which he himself knows, and all his countrymen admit they expect, will bring relief to the farmers of Ireland. Does he wish the present confusion in the present Land System to remain? He will probably say he does not. Then why is he now doing his best to weaken the hands of the Government in dealing with these evils and to turn out the Government that proposes to deal with them? The hon. Member talks about practical politicians. I submit that this is rather a curious way of recruiting his rather thin and emaciated ranks, by setting the whole of rural Ireland against them. That is Independence if you like; call it by any name you like, but do not call it Patriotism. The hon. and learned Member asked: "On what is the next General Election going to be fought out?" To that question I have only one answer to make, and I will give it in words which I am sure hon. Gentlemen opposite will not object to—in the words of Lord Salisbury himself. Lord Salisbury at Edinburgh said:—

> "Lord Rosebery had been kind enough to say he was proposing something analogous to a foreign referendum, and he was determining what should be the subject of reference to the electors at the next Election. He had no more power than himself or his (Lord Salisbury's) hearers to determine what should be the subject of reference to the electors at the next Election. They would vote upon the matter that peculiarly concerned them."

This at all events is certain, and this is all that I will say—that the Liberal Party and the Liberal Leaders will go to the General Election, whenever Her Majesty is advised to dissolve Parliament, with the question of the Better Government of Ireland, the question of the Concession to Ireland of a Full Measure of Local Autonomy, not falling behind the measure of 1893, as the prime policy of the Government and of the Party.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I had not intended when I came down to this House to-night to intervene in this Debate, neither should I have now risen if the quarrel that has been going on in this House had been confined solely to a dispute between the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down and the hon. Gentleman who has Moved the Amendment, The right hon. Gentleman thinks it is policy, and I daresay that it is policy, to make a speech which I suppose is intended to damage the electoral prospects of the hon. Member in Ireland; and certainly his speech was more flatly directed to that end than to answering the arguments which have been brought forward by the hon. Gentleman who has moved the Amendment. That is, however, after all, no affair of mine, and had not the right hon. Gentleman thought fit to drag into the controversy those who sit on the Unionist Benches I should not have troubled the House on this occasion. But there was one general argument running through the whole speech of the right hon. Gentleman, to which I listened with utter amazement. What was the central argument of the right hon. Gentleman? What is his chief weapon directed against the mover of this Amendment? Why, it was that the hon. Member for Waterford had to deal in the present case with a Government which has shown by its action that it is deeply committed to Home Rule and desired to see Home Rule passed.

> "How, then," said the right hon. Gentleman, "can you do this Government, friendly to your main object, the enormous injury of voting for this Amendment? How can you injure the cause to which you and we on this Bench are equally pledged?"

The right hon. Gentleman assumes, of course, that, if beaten on the Amendment, the Government will have either to resign or to dissolve Parliament. If the Government dissolves, I suppose, from the point of view of the right hon. Gentleman, they will come back in a position to carry Home Rule which the hon. Member and the right hon. Gentleman so much desire. Therefore the hon. Member in hurrying the date of the Dissolution is only hurrying the bringing to power a Government which, unlike the present Government, would bring in at once and carry through a Home Rule Bill. It is admitted that the present occupants of the Treasury Bench in this Parliament are not going to touch Home Rule, and therefore they are to come back after a General Election with a majority. Clearly the advent of Home Rule would be greatly hastened thereby. How, then, can it be an injury to Home Rule or to the Government that they should be obliged to go to the country? There is one reason.

MR. T. HEALY (Louth, N.): Why do you vote for the Amendment?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): I will say why I vote for it. I am now dealing with the arguments of the right hon. Gentleman. I say from his point of view there can be but one possible reason why he thinks that the carrying of this Amendment will be inimical to Home Rule, and that is that when the Government does dissolve the verdict of the country will be against them. The hon. Member for Louth interrupted me just now, but if he, one of the most ingenious Members of this House, will show any other reason in the course of this Debate why the carrying of this Amendment will injure the cause of Home Rule I will promise not to vote for it. I think that it is plain that the Government, by the whole course of the speech delivered on their behalf by the Irish Secretary, admit that they are, what I for a long time have told them that they are, holders of power, holders of Office which they know in their hearts they have no prospect of retaining for one hour if they accepted this Amendment. Having listened to the speech of the Mover of the Amendment, and to the reply made to it on behalf of the Government, I confess that if I were in the position of the hon. Member I should have great doubt of the moral sincerity of right hon. Gentlemen who sit on that Bench in that quarter of the House. What is the feeling on Home Rule which at this moment exists in the bulk of the Liberal Party? A very extraordinary historical account is given by the right hon. Gentleman of the changes of public opinion on this subject. In 1886–7 there was an overwhelming passion on the part of the Liberal Members of the British electorate for Home Rule, but the first fervour of the honeymoon is now over. A calm and rational affection has now succeeded the earlier transports, and, if I rightly interpret the view of the right hon. Gentleman, he thinks that domestic felicity between the two important parties to this contract is more likely to come about under the second state of things than under the first. But there is very often in matrimony, as in other relations of life, a strange resemblance between calm and rational affection and something which cynical outsiders call indifference. I cannot help entertaining the suspicion that the calm and rational affection in the English constituencies, which takes the form of leaving Ireland severely alone from the beginning to the end of an election, is something rather different from the settled desire to see this question brought to a successful issue with which the right hon. Gentleman credits his friends in the House and in the country. Any man the least acquainted with the course of electoral policies in the last few years knows that it is the most earnest advice given by Liberal managers to a Liberal candidate that he is to say as little as he decently can about Home Rule, and to say nothing at all unless there is some chance of his being reported. Well, I leave the more general aspect of the question and come to that which caused me to rise this evening. I refer to the hints and the innuendoes—I will not say charges—thrown out by the right hon. Gentleman that there is on the present occasion some dark compact, some hidden arrangement, between the Mover of this Amendment and the Unionist Party, of whom I am one, who mean to vote in favour of it. The right hon. Gentleman has talked as if the historical facts which he related took place some ten years ago. He asked whether some arrangement has been made between the Party led by the hon. Gentleman and the Unionist Party with regard to the Maamtrasna Inquiry and the amnesty of political prisoners. I should like to know what is the purpose of the right hon. Gentleman in throwing out these hints and innuendoes. Does the right hon. Gentleman believe them himself? Does a single man now sitting in this House, acquainted with what has taken place during the last five or six years in Parliament, acquainted with the public behaviour of those who are responsible for the policy of the Unionist Party, believe these insinuations? There is not a man who does, and the last man to believe them is the right hon. Gentleman himself. But I suppose he thinks that outside of this House there are persons less well informed than himself, on whose minds this legend of an arrangement made for the purpose of obtaining power at the sacrifice of principle between Gentlemen below the Gangway and us might have the effect of chilling the feeling of enthusiasm which they have for the Unionist Party. There are such things as discreditable political alliances. It may be possible, it may be even easy, to find an example in political history of a great Party which finds itself in a minority, and which sees it can turn that minority into a majority by accepting a great Constitutional Revolution, which up to the very moment of that political necessity it had publicly and vehemently refused, forming an alliance designed to give it a long term of power. Such cases occur. I do not defend them, nor does it rest with me to plead the cause of those who have followed the example. There are Gentlemen in this House who are generally sitting not far from the right hon. Gentleman, who might be called upon to explain the circumstances in which it is justifiable to give up your often-stated opinion in order to turn a Parliamentary minority into a majority. I am not among them, and certainly the defence of such a policy—if it be defensible—does not necessarily or properly rest on me. In my judgment, the honour of the Party with which I am associated seems to me to be the most valuable of its political assets—putting it on no higher ground. I should consider that he was not merely an unworthy but a dishonest politician who would attempt to barter that honour for the temporary support of a few votes. No, Sir, the reason that I am going to vote for a Dissolution is that I want a Dissolution. The reason that I want a Dissolution is because I am convinced, with the Government themselves, that the people of this country have made up their minds what they think of the present occupants of the Treasury Bench. I am, however, in no hurry to see this event. The complaints of the right hon. Gentleman against the hon. and learned Member for Waterford were that, if this Amendment were carried, and if a Dissolution took place immediately, the opportunities of gaining favour with the democracy of the country would be taken away from them. As far as I am concerned, they are welcome to this opportunity. I have never observed in the history of this country, that any Party or any Government have gained credit for hanging on to Office, in the vulgar sense, without power and with only the insignia of Office—for hanging on to their places when they were deprived of all real influence over the course of events, and when the general trend of public opinion was against them. Under such circumstances, a Government may possibly do good administrative work; it may possibly continue to hold its tenure of Office for one month, two months, six months, or even for a year or more, but you will never find, in the history of this country, that this had the result of increasing the credit of a Government with those in whose favour their fortunes must ultimately rest. Therefore, it matters nothing to me, nor does it matter to the ultimate success of the Party with which I am associated, whether the Government do or do not carry out the intention of this Resolution. But, Sir, holding, as I do, that the Government no longer represents public opinion in the country; seeing that they themselves, by their own admissions, hold that the work of this Session is to be a mere waste of Parliamentary time——

MR. J. MORLEY: No.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Well, I will not stop to argue that now. Holding all these opinions, rightly or wrongly, should I or should I not be doing my duty to my constituents and to my Party if I refused to vote for an Amendment which exactly carries out the policy which I have in view? The hon. and learned Gentleman who moves this Amendment and I are divided by differences as profound, as irreconcilable, with regard to the legislation and the Constitution of this country, and with regard to the mode of administration by which order is to be observed in Ireland, as are any two Members of this House. Nothing leads me to believe that he has modified his opinions? certainly I have not modified mine. There is no declaration of public policy that I have made ever since I had anything to do with Ireland which I feel in the least degree called upon to modify or explain away. The opinions I held last year and the year before—the opinions I held five years ago—are the opinions I hold now; and it is because I believe that the democracy of this country share those opinions that I call on the Government to give us the opportunity of seeing whether or not they are the legitimate holders of Office. It is for these reasons that I shall go into the Lobby in support of the Amendment calling for an immediate Dissolution; and I shall do so in the full belief that my action will not be misinterpreted by the Government, by this House, or by the country to which we desire to appeal.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): I congratulate the right hon. Gentleman on his frankness. It does him the utmost credit. At the same time, I think he might have been more merciful to those who are temporarily to become his allies. I quite agree that the important statement of Conservative policy to which he has given utterance will be regarded as having far-reaching and possibly historical effect. What is the situation? A section of Irish representatives in this House, small, it is true, in numbers, but, as I do not disguise from myself or the House, representing a fair body of opinion in Ireland, have put forward an occasion in which the Tory Party and the Liberal Unionist Party would have had an opportunity of making, on the eve of the General Election, a grave and weighty statement of policy. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Manchester, with a frankness which does him credit, and with an absence of duplicity which we all expect from him, has nailed his colours to the mast. He has declared that, if his Party come into Office, so far as he is concerned, he has not one jot or one tittle to alter in the policy, the speeches, or the declarations which guided and animated him and his Party from 1886 to 1892. I honour him for that declaration of policy. I think it was frank, manly, and straightforward, and like the man who made it. That is his policy. And are we to be asked to-night to join in this unholy alliance? Sir, the right hon. Gentleman challenged me to give any reason for not voting for the Amendment of the Member for Waterford, except the one that Home Rule would be beaten if the present Government were driven out of office. I, on the other hand, desired to know his reasons for voting with the Member for Waterford, and we are now left with little speculation on the point. The right hon. Gentleman believes that, by supporting this Amendment, he can strike a deadly blow at Home Rule. Is not that a sufficient reason why I should vote against the Amendment? The Member for Manchester and the Member for Waterford, as well as the Member for the Harbour Division, have declared that there are no terms of agreement or alliance between the two sections who will be found together in the Lobby to-night. I accept that declaration, but I lament the fact. I lament for the sake of the Parnellite Party as well as the Tory Party. I should have been pleased to hear that the Parnellite Party were not selling themselves for nothing. I have been in alliance with the Tory Party before now; we may be in alliance with them again. But I know no occasion when the Irish Party ever gave their votes unless they got something for them. But, Sir, we have fallen upon new times; or, rather, I should say, we have gone back to the early course of altruism; and here are votes—a most valuable commodity in this House—and they are to be given freely to the Tory Party to-night, for their purposes, and without even a promise to take a sixpence off the whisky tax. I confess that I feel a sense of painful surprise at that. It may be Parnellism; but I call it nonsense. And when we are told of what the deceased Mr. Parnell would have done upon this occasion, and what he would have done upon another occasion, remembering that there is now a Land Bill in promise, my memory goes back to 1881, when Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice moved a hostile Amendment as to a minute portion of the Act of 1881. We had the Tory Government then at our mercy, and we could have put that Government out of office. But the late Mr. Parnell did not seize that opportunity, although he could have done so, and could have come back 30 stronger at least upon the old franchise. The Member for Waterford recited, in Shakespearian manner, seven stages of Home Rule; but there was one stage of Home Rule which it was remarkable that he should have forgotten, that being the only stage to which I attach any considerable importance—namely, the passing through this House of the Home Rule Bill. Fancy a gentleman getting up in this House to give an account of the progress of Home Rule and omitting the slight incident of the framing, drafting, and passage of that measure! It is the play of *Hamlet* with Hamlet left out. What was this Home Rule Bill? Let the House cast its mind back to the time of the split, and they will remember that it was stated by Mr. Parnell that there were four vital points of difficulty upon which the charge of treachery was made against the Liberal Party. The Member for Waterford is four years late in making this charge. The first of the four vital points, as I recollect them, was the question of the retention of the Irish Members in the Imperial Parliament; our number, it was stated, was to be cut down from 103 to 32. The Bill of 1893 gave the lie to that. That is my first stage of Home Rule. It was stated also that a settlement of the Land Question was to be withheld from the Irish Parliament, and that the English Legislature would be asked to settle it. The Bill of 1893 gave the lie to the first statement, and the Land Bill of 1895 will give the lie to the other. That is my second stage of Home Rule. Then it was stated that the control of the Royal Irish Constabulary was to be denied to the Irish Parliament; the Bill of 1893 gave the control within a limited period to that Parliament. Lastly, we were told that the appointment of the Judiciary was to be denied for a period of 10 or 12 years; the Bill of 1893 contradicted that statement. And now that every statement in the document which is the Charter of Parnellism has been denied, and refuted by the facts of the time, are we to drive out the Government which passed this Bill because, as I understand, it is not proceeding rapidly enough to present to the electorate the Home Rule issue? And in what year is this demand made? Why, Sir, it is in the year in which the Land Bill is to be introduced which every farmer in Ireland is longing to see passed—a Bill so important, although it is only the necessary complement of the Bill of 1891, that I venture to say the Tory landlord party of Ireland will not go into the lobby against it, so keen is the demand of the Northern farmers in regard to the subject. But I will pass the Land Bill by, and argue the case as if there were no Land Bill. There is to be a Welsh Disestablishment Bill, and, so far as I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, I welcome it, if it is only to repay the loyalty of our Welsh friends. Ireland returns 80 Home Rulers out of 103 Members, but Wales returns 32 out of 34. I am not merely thinking of their votes for Home Rule, I am thinking also of the Irish Church Disestablishment of 1869. For my part, I shall be quite ready to continue to give them my support in putting down an Establishment that I believe is as odious to Celtic Wales as was Protestant-established ascendancy in Ireland. Have we no other reasons for our action? The right hon. Member for Manchester challenged me to give them, and I will give them. Is the best way to recommend Home Rule to the electorate to drive to the polls, defeated, discredited, and disgraced in this House, the men who are responsible far the Home Rule Bill of 1893? I will not mention the word gratitude, because you all know there is no gratitude in politics, but, as a matter of tactics, are we to recommend Home Rule to the British electorate by kicking out of Office the men who helped to make Home Rule possible? With what face should I go into the country to carry on that work—carried on so successfully by the Member for Waterford and the Member for North Dublin for many years, namely, the work of recommending the British constituencies to support Home Rule—and ask Newcastle, Manchester, or Bristol to return men for whom I had given a vote of No Confidence in the House of Commons? I should expect the electorate to ask me if I believed in the sincerity of these men or not. The Member for Waterford was careful not to commit himself upon that point; he made no actual charge of insincerity, but he connoted a number of scattered details from which he asked that the inference of insincerity should be drawn. If it be the unhappy fact that the Liberal Party and its Ministers are insincere about Home Rule and have no intention of passing it, are we to turn to the Tory Party? Are we to put out of Office the men who declare, at any rate it may be lip-service, and are we to support those who so far from declaring even lip-service threaten us with civil war if Home Rule is passed? If I shared to the full the opinion of the Member for Waterford, that the Liberal Party was not doing all that it might or should in regard to this question, I have to consider their performances as contrasted with the attitude that may be taken up by the Tory Party when they get into Office. Would the Tory Party release the political prisoners? The

Member for Waterford has been most careful not to offend the susceptibilities of the Tory Party. Although the Parnellite Party has a large and varied programme they are not so foolish as to put all their eggs into one basket, and, accordingly, with the nicest care and discrimination, considering that there is no bargain struck, and that there is nothing to be given for these votes, the Tory Party are asked to-night simply and solely to go into the Lobby for an Amendment which every Tory can support, and they are entirely free from the contamination of pledging themselves in any way about amnesty or about Maamtrasna. Now, if the Parnellites adopt this system I can only say that I believe it will not be regarded favourably in Ireland even by their friends. If their votes are valuable, and if an alliance is maintainable, the very least thing which the Parnellite Party should have got for their support of the Tories would have been the promise of the release of the political prisoners. If the Member for Manchester or his Friends will say that on their responsibility as Ministers their first act will be to release all the dynamite prisoners——

Mr. W. H. K. REDMOND: Why do you not call them political prisoners?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: If he will make that statement, I shall be most happy to go into the Lobby to-night with the Member for Waterford. But we are neither to have a Land Bill from the Tory Pary, a Home Rule Bill, the reduction of the Whisky Tax, the release of the political prisoners, nor even so far as I know, the grant to the Christian Brothers. I am at a loss to know what solid ground there can be for an alliance between Irish Nationalists and English Conservatives on this question. Having, I think, disposed of the idea that any advantage to Ireland can come out of this vote, I should like to refer to some remarks, which have been recently made by the hon. Member for Waterford, in support of the Government on this occasion. We have been told that the Government are slackening in their enthusiasm for Home Rule. Last year, the hon. Member for Waterford made a speech, and charged the Government with not having sufficiently grappled with the House of Lords, but to-night he has complained that they have been grappling rather too much with it, and have been putting the question of the Upper Chamber in front of that of Home Rule. He also suggests that certain Members of the Government are insincere in their action. I should like to give the Tory Party an idea of the grounds on which this policy of expelling the Government from Office is defended in Ireland. The hon. Member for Waterford did not venture to tell us to-night what was to be the policy of the Tory Party if they came into Office; but, in addressing his supporters in Waterford, he was much more communicative, and set out for their behalf a sort of unauthorised programme. The hon. Member said: "I do not believe the Tory Party would dare to resort to a coercion policy." Will the right hon. Member for Manchester endorse that assertion? No; there is a dead silence on the part of the Opposition. The hon. Member for Waterford continued: "I believe, on the contrary, they will be inclined to deal with practical Irish questions." I should like to know what are the practical Irish questions with which the right hon. Member for Manchester will deal when they come into Office. What are the Irish questions on which the Tory Party and ourselves are likely to agree? And the hon. Member, who it, must be remembered, is a strenuous Home Ruler, says—

> "It would be a question for us to consider whether, if we cannot get Home Rule this year, or next year, from confessedly a Liberal Government, and when they will not give us anything else, it is not better to have a Government in power that could give us, and probably would give us, something in the meantime."

The hon. Member for Waterford wants Home Rule placed in the front, yet he is willing to put a Tory Government in Office for seven years, who confessedly would oppose Home Rule, just for such sops and doles as might be flung to us by the Tory Party in the meantime. Sir, I venture to say that this is practically an abandonment—nay, a prostitution, of Irish nationality. I, at least, am not willing to put a Tory Government in Office because, while abandoning Home Rule, they would give us something practical in the meantime. I believe Home Rule to be practical, and the Liberal Party believe it to be practical. It comes with remarkable grace from those who claim to be ardent Nationalists that they would drive this Government out of Office and put a Tory Government in power for seven years on the chance or the promise of getting something practical while the Home Rule question was set aside—a Poor Law Guardians Bill, a Light Railways Bill for Connemara, or a Docks Bill; or some other mess of pottage for the sale of the country. But even the mess of pottage is not guaranteed by the right hon. Member for Manchester. No, the right hon. Gentleman declares in the most frank and manly way that he does not recede by one jot or tittle from the position he took as the coercionist Irish Secretary from 1887 to 1892. I confess I should like to have seen more progress made on this Home Rule question. I deplore as earnestly as the hon. Member for Waterford any slackening of enthusiasm, or cooling of the fires, which has hitherto animated the British people on this great question. But are the Liberal Party alone responsible for this slackening of enthusiasm, if it has taken place? Do you not think that the British electorate were affected against us by such incidents as the calling of the great and venerable statesman who pledged himself to the service of the Irish people on this matter, a "grand old spider," or a "garrulous old man," or "a vain old rhetorician"? Have these things had no prejudicial effect? Do they not offer some ground, at least, of explanation for the position in which we now find ourselves? Sir, I recognise that against the idea of the liberation of Ireland—against the idea to restore its Parliament, there is arrayed a combination of forces such as never were directed against any measure hitherto proposed by British politicians. The hon. Member for Waterford spoke of the great Reform Bill, the Redistribution Bill, and the measure for Catholic Emancipation: but these were Bills which directly affected the English people themselves. In dealing with the Home Rule Bill, however, we have to place before the English people a measure which not only does not directly concern them, but which, it is carefully represented to them, would lead to the separation and ruin of the Empire if it were passed. Am I to be told that action and statements of this kind have no prejudicial effect on the progress of the question? Are the Government, which have had the courage to deal with this important subject, entitled to no consideration whatever in relation to its progress? And are we, forsooth, to be stigmatised as traitors to our country because the Liberal Party, while endeavouring to benefit Ireland, at the same time are trying to do something to relieve the working classes of England and Scotland, or to relieve our Celtic kith and kin in Wales from a groaning oppression which we ourselves in Ireland had shaken off? Sir, as I understand, we are in alliance with the Liberal Party. That alliance connotes more conditions than one. It does not connote the dominance of Ireland in the alliance, nor does it connote its subjection. It is impossible, however, to form into words a definition which would meet the circumstances. I will only say this, in conclusion—that, having upon the one hand a Party which I believe is dominated by a desire to restore to Ireland her Parliament, and upon the other a Party which desires only landlord ascendency, landlord oppression, and the continuation of the oligarchy which has so long oppressed us in Ireland—I do not think it is good for Ireland that a gentleman, in the position of the Member for Waterford, has no other encouragement to give to the Party which is trying to aid us and protect us against the Party which is seeking to continue our enslavement, has no other medicine or cordial for them but doubts and sneers, and quips and quotations, and suggestions of despair. I believe that the best way to win Home Rule for Ireland is to stick to the Party which is trying to win it for us, and to oppose the Party which refuses it; and until we see some good ground for smashing up an alliance, pieced together with great care and sacrifice of time, and through the genius, not of one man alone, but of generations and hundreds of men, the cause of Ireland requires us to vote down Amendments such as this, which have no other object than bringing into power the very worst enemies of our country.

MR. T. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour) said, if any other hon. Member had made the speech just delivered, he should have taken occasion to remonstrate with him, on the opportunity he had sought to make an attack upon a dead man. The hon. and learned Member had taken up what was known as the Parnell Manifesto, and, dealing with it paragraph by paragraph, had characterised its statements as lies. He congratulated the Government upon the support and the advocacy of a man of that character. The hon. and learned Member said he was not going to mention the word "gratitude." He (the speaker) was not surprised that the word stuck in his throat. He did not think the Chief Secretary would be very grateful to the hon. and learned Member for his speech. The right hon. Gentleman, he believed, was in earnest on the question of Home Rule; and his greatest difficulty was the weakness of his own colleagues in the Government. And, most unfortunately, the effect of the speech just delivered would strengthen their hands against the Chief Secretary, and furnish arguments for further postponing Home Rule. The hon. and learned Member spoke of his (the speaker's) Party having sold their services for nothing. He admitted that it had not been the policy of the hon. and learned Gentleman to sell his services for nothing. But his language, while it might be used to his own colleagues in the bosom of his own Party, had no application to the Independent Irish Members. Both in the speech of the hon. and learned Member, and in that of the Chief Secretary, the leading idea was, that in submitting the question to the electorate they were necessarily defeating the Government. On what did they base that argument? Did they believe that Home Rule had gone back in the constituencies? If they did, what had the hon. and learned Member and his friends gained by the abandonment and betrayal of Parnell? Home Rule was solidly supported in the English constituencies at the time of his death. Was the verdict they had to give upon their actions and their conduct, that they were afraid to face the English electorate? The Chief Secretary had not grappled with the arguments which the hon. and learned Member for Waterford addressed to the House upon the Home Rule question. His whole object was to make an electioneering speech on behalf of his colleagues from Ireland. If the right hon. Gentleman thought that the Irish farmers were discontented with the attitude which he (the speaker) and his friends had taken up, and would hunt them from the hustings, why did he not take up their challenge and place the question before the constituencies? Surely the obvious answer to all the right hon. Gentleman had said was, that he did not himself believe in the argument he had addressed to the House with regard to the Land question. He should be sorry to make any accusations against the general run of the English Liberals, in regard to their sincerity on the Home Rule question; but an enormous change had taken place in the policy of the Government, and Home Rule did not now occupy the position it occupied some years ago. It was true that the Home Rule Bill had passed the House of Commons. The Government could not have faced Parliament in 1892 without bringing in such a Bill. Faithful as their Irish colleagues professed to be, it would be impossible for them to support a Government which did not at least make an appearance of fulfilling its pledges. They were accused of endeavouring to drive the Liberal Party out of office. They were not fools in Ireland. They had watched the progress of the controversy, and they had seen that the moment disunion in the Irish ranks cropped up, every interest included in the Newcastle Programme came prominently to the front. He would be glad to support Welsh Disestablishment, but when the question came up he would have to make up his mind how far the Welsh Members were responsible for the present condition of Home Rule, because they were the first to seek to change the position after the rejection of the Home Rule Bill by the House of Lords. They were told that it was the policy of the Liberal Party to "fill up the cup." That policy had been very well characterised as a sham. It was an attempt, not to strengthen the position of Home Rule, but to maintain the Liberals in their present position. Then it was said they could not allow the Lords to fix the time of a Dissolution. That again was a pretence to stick to Office and to postpone the Irish question. The hon. and learned Gentleman had passed a great eulogium on the Liberal Leaders for their sincerity. He wanted proof of that sincerity, and he looked to the broad fact that, since the

General Election of 1892 the political situation in the House of Commons had been absolutely in the hands of the Irish Representatives, and yet not one single Irish measure had been placed on the Statute Book. The Chief Secretary had, in his electioneering speech, lectured them on patriotism; but they were not going to take any instructions in patriotism from him. The right hon. Gentleman commenced his speech with a declaration that he was as earnest on this question as they were. They did not dispute his earnestness. He did not think the right hon. Gentleman could point, during the present administration, to a speech from any one of them in any way impugning the earnestness of the right hon. Gentleman on this question; but the right hon. Gentleman knew perfectly well that the Irish people, whose whole interests were at stake in this question, were aware that behind the Chief Secretary, and acting with him and in his counsel, were prominent members who desired to see the Irish question put very far indeed into the background. He deplored the speech which had been delivered from the Irish Benches that night, giving encouragement to defaulters and dissenters in the Liberal ranks. He deplored the position that Irishmen had taken up. Instead of supporting the right hon. Gentleman in his earnest intentions, and giving him encouragement to combat the dissensions in his own ranks, arguments were addressed from the Irish Benches which would be used in the councils of the Liberal Party in favour of the belief that the Irish Party in that House were prepared to take whatever the Liberal Government chose to give them. He would like to take the right hon. Gentleman's memory back a little. Every word that had been said with regard to their Land Bill was said last year with regard to the Evicted Tenants Bill. Did the right hon. Gentleman think that they could admit that the men who got the benefit of the Land Acts of 1881 and 1887 had a prior claim to the men who were evicted and cast out, who went into the fight and sacrificed all in the endeavour to gain these advantages? They were not afraid to face the electorate of Ireland on that question. He wished to point out that precisely the same language was used in the House towards them at the beginning of last Session as had been used that night. When they brought forward an Amendment they were upbraided in the same manner, and charged with endeavouring to turn out the Government that were going to pass the Evicted Tenants Bill. What did that amount to, after all? An attempt was made to pass that Bill through the House of Commons. It was placed in the Government programme early last Session, and Irish Members were kept hanging about the House to support English legislation by having the Bill dangled before their eyes. It did not get a proper chance of being considered in the House at all, and the Bill was rejected in the House of Lords. Not a single effort was made by the Government to restore one of those evicted tenants. In the face of all that, and in the face of the language held out to them then, they would view with very light hearts indeed the language now used by Ministers and their supporters on the Benches opposite.

MR. J. ROSS (Londonderry) remarked that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary said that the carrying of this Amendment would be a deadly blow to Home Rule. What did that mean but that if the Government went to the country at the present time on the question of Home Rule alone, the country would be against them? He had never known a more important admission to be made by a Minister in Office. More than that, they had the hon. and learned Member for Louth making the same admission. The hon. Member besought his own Party to stand by the Government and to fight, because the effect of going to the country on the question of Home Rule alone meant the establishment of a Tory Government for seven years.

MR. J. MORLEY: I meant that if we are put out of Office by an Irish vote, that would be a deadly blow to Home Rule.

MR. ROSS thought that that was a distinction without a difference. From the very beginning of the right hon. Gentleman's speech to the end the same damning admission was apparent. The right hon. Gentleman was pleading for the life of Her Majesty's Government, and was backed up in that by the hon and learned Gentleman the Member for Louth. He contended that in all common sense, what fell from the right hon. Gentleman was an admission that the country on the question of Home Rule alone was against the present Government. He did not wonder at the anger displayed by the Chief Secretary against the Member for Waterford, because he had no answer to make to that Gentleman's arguments. The hon. Member called upon the Government for some proof of their sincerity.

> "For four Sessions," he said, "we have been giving you the entire support of the Nationalists, and what price have you paid? We never do anything without a price."

He did not think that the Nationalists of Ireland would be content with mere lip service, or with the mere intonation of the Home Rule Creed at Cardiff or Derby with damnatory clauses against the Liberal Unionists. The Government were on the horns of a dilemma. Either the last Election was no declaration on the part of the constituencies in favour of Home Rule, or else the constituencies had changed their minds. There was nothing he liked so much as to appeal from language used in debate to what had been written. He held in his hand a volume of history written by the right hon. Gentleman who led the majority of the Nationalist Party. In that history some remarkable sentences were to be found, which threw some light on the attitude of the Party. Discussing the cause of the collapse of the Young Ireland Party after Mitchell's trial, the right hon. Gentleman said—

> "It is another illustration of the fact which O'Connell's movement had exemplified before, that in Irish politics a climax cannot be repeated or recalled. There is something fitful in all Irish agitation. The national emotion can be wrought up to a certain temperature, and if at that boiling point nothing is done, the heat suddenly goes out, and no blowing of cyclopean bellows can rekindle it. The Repeal agitation was brought up to this point when the meeting at Clontarf was convened. The dispersal of the meeting was the end of the whole agitation. With the Young Ireland movement the trial of Mitchell formed the climax. After that a wise legislator would have known there was nothing more to fear."

He asked the right hon. Gentleman now to apply his language here. The wise legislator knew perfectly well that the climax was reached; that from the death of Parnell there remained no real combination for Home Rule in the country. He supported the demands of the hon. Member for Waterford from another point of view. The contention of the Representatives of the North of Ireland was that they had a direct mandate that the question of Home Rule should be submitted by itself to the constituencies. Over and over again they heard the charge made against the Government that they had no mandate to carry a Bill of that kind, but there was always some supporter of the Government found to produce an obscure paragraph from his election address to show that he made it clear that he was in favour of a Home Rule Bill, the particulars of which he knew nothing about. The present afforded the Government an opportunity of showing whether they had a mandate at the last Election or not. If they had not, why should they not ask for a mandate now? Their action now showed that they dared not face the country. The House of Lords threw out the Home Rule Bill with ignominy. That gave a chance to the Government to show whether they had a backing in the country, and they could have done it without a revolution or a Resolution; but they dare not face the House of Lords because they knew the country was behind it. The people of Ireland, who were said to be enslaved by an Orange hierarchy, took the rejection of the Bill with the utmost equanimity. There was more indignation in Ireland over the addition to the whisky tax than there would be over the rejection of half-a-dozen Home Rule Bills. In the bye Elections the subject had been kept in the background and had been forced to the front only by Unionist candidates. Government candidates tried to keep it in the rear by describing it as a red herring drawn across the track. The Unionists, believing that the results of Home Rule would be disastrous, had determined that the question should be submitted to the country by itself without being mixed up with others. The Ministry could not be expected to carry the Newcastle programme with a majority of twelve. They said they must remain in office to pass a Land Bill; but even about that Bill there were circumstances of suspicion, for, although it was declared to be drafted and ready, when they were asked whether it contained anything about evicted tenants, they were not able to say. In his opinion it would be brought forward to help in the policy of filling up the cup, and there would be something in it to make it unacceptable to the Lords. Happily one supporter of the Government had given them his opinion of the policy of filling up the cup, and had said that he would not be a party to it any longer, and would not support a Government which existed with no other purpose. The Welsh supporters of Disestablishment did not care a straw for Home Rule, but they were appealed to for assistance in sacrificing the liberty of free citizens in Ireland. The hon. Member for Waterford believed there ought to be a clear verdict given, and he manfully said that Home Rule ought not to be smuggled through Parliament. If the Government refused to submit the question by itself, they were smuggling it into law. Speeches had been made almost vituperating the Mover of this Amendment, who challenged the Government to show what they had done. "Few and evil have been the days of their pilgrimage," and the sooner they were over the better for all concerned. One reason for putting the question before the electorate was that every well-wisher of Ireland must desire to see her freed from suspense; the people wanted to know their fate. The challenge had been fairly given; it had not been fairly met; and by remaining in office the Government forfeited the respect of the constituencies.

*MR. T. LOUGH (Islington, W.): the Government had the best reason in the world for remaining in office, and it was that they were supported by a majority in that House. If the Ministry had to lament the defection of a follower, so had the Opposition, and one can balance the other. As for enthusiasm in Ireland dying out, was there a single constituency in Ireland that had voted for Home Rule which would not do so again? Would the Unionist Party in Ireland be increased when the inevitable appeal was made to the country? It was well known that in Ireland enthusiasm for Home Rule had risen during the last two or three years, and the Party representing that policy would be successful at the elections to a degree they never had been before. It was said the Government were evading a challenge; but they had not been in office three months before they were told that. Yet three years had passed, and every obligation of consistency and honour demanded that they should remain in office until the House expressed a contrary opinion. There was no diminution of Home Rule feeling in England; public feeling was just as high as it ever was. It was too much to expect people in England to follow the details of the Irish quarrel, and the Parnellite split was a little incident that should be mentioned as some excuse if the constituencies were thought to have shown a little coolness. Against what part of the kingdom had the policy of the House of Lords been chiefly directed? What part of the kingdom had suffered most at the hands of the House of Lords? The Lords threw out the Home Rule Bill, although in the House of Commons everything was done that could be done to pass it into law. Therefore, if the agitation in England was turning against the House of Lords, Ireland would benefit as well as everywhere else when the right of the House of Lords to fling out legislation passed by the House of Commons was checked. Now he wished to submit two or three reasons why he hoped the Government would stand firmly against this Amendment. The first was, that the condition of Ireland made a change of Government undesirable. It was stated in the Queen's Speech that crime in Ireland was less than it had ever been since the present records had been taken. Therefore, they should keep in Office the Government that had produced such a result. Most of the legislation with regard to Ireland to be proposed that Session, would be of a non-contentious character, as many of the opponents of the Government wished to see it passed. Once again they saw in Ireland the sad picture they had seen constantly there since the Union—of a country threatened by the spectre of famine. It had been sad to him at Question Time since the Session opened, to hear the Chief Secretary for Ireland applied to, to open relief works in different parts of Ireland. The people would die like flies unless something in that direction were done for them. The Chief Secretary had shown a sympathetic spirit in the matter. He was face to face with what might be a grave emergency. There was an old maxim that "you should never swop horses while crossing a stream," and the House should pause before it displaced the Government under present circumstances. It seemed to be assumed that in the west of Ireland the distress arose entirely from the failure of the potato crop last year. The potato crop was not so important to the well-being of the people as it was formerly. The crop had failed all over Ireland to the extent of 30 per cent., but the hay crop in Ireland, which was far larger than the potato crop, was 20 per cent. above the average yield last year, and oats were 7 or 8 per cent. above the average. Other crops also showed an increase, yet in spite of this the country was reduced to starvation. What Ireland lost in potatoes this year was not nearly as much as England lost through the fall of prices in barley and wheat, yet there was no famine in England. Why should the shortness in Ireland result in famine? Because the poor people in Ireland were struggling under burdens of various kinds far too heavy for them to bear. The Government should continue in Office to study this more closely. The rents in Ireland amounted to £10,000,000 per annum, and the taxation of Ireland to £11,000,000 per annum—£21,000,000 being, in all, wrung out of this starving people. By the failure of a single crop, men, women, and children were threatened with starvation. Then the Government should be kept in Office because the question of agricultural rents in Ireland required to be further dealt with by the House of Commons. Every person who took a reasonable view of the situation, must admit that there were certain points which must be settled before Home Rule could be conferred on Ireland. In 1887, at Glasgow, the Duke of Devonshire said that if the question of rents were dealt with, and the claims of landlords were satisfactorily met, one of the great difficulties in the way of Home Rule would have disappeared. Every one must feel that the House of Commons, which imposed these rents, should deal with them more effectively than it had hitherto done before Home Rule was given to Ireland. This House had fixed the principles upon which rents were assessed; it appointed the judges who fixed the rents; it provided police and soldiers by whom the decisions of these judges were enforced. All nature declared that the rents were so high as to be unpayable. These rents were chiefly paid to absentee landlords, and absenteeism had been steadily increasing during the last twenty-five years. This was one result of the "remedial legislation" which had been passed for Ireland. Under the Irish Church Bill the tithes, which had always formerly been spent in the localities had been turned into an absentee, rent. Under the Irish Land Act relations had been established between tenants and landlords, which tended greatly towards banishing the latter from Ireland. Three-fourths of the rents in Ireland were paid to absentee landlords. Some of the evils of the absentee system ought to be dealt with before the country was entrusted with Home Rule. His third reason for keeping the present Government in Office was, that the taxation of Ireland required further reform before the question of Home Rule was referred to the Constituencies. He believed Ireland had far more to gain from the reduction of taxation even than from the reduction of rent. The total taxation of Ireland amounted to £11,000,000. The country could never prosper until this was reduced to £5,500,000. Before the Union the taxation of Ireland did not exceed £3,000,000 or £4,000,000. Yet the population of Ireland was as great then as it is now, and the wealth of Ireland was much larger than at present, because all agricultural countries in Europe were better off before competition from abroad had come into existence. After the Union the first thing the Government did was to double the taxation of the country, and it had been regularly increased, until now £11,000,000 was wrung out of Ireland in local and Imperial taxation. He believed that an excellent system of Government could be established in Ireland for £5,500,000. Both the Chief Secretary and the late Prime Minister had shown a sympathetic spirit in the treatment of this difficult question. A Committee had been appointed and valuable evidence was now being collected which, he believed, bore out the strong statements he had made. The question of taxation, therefore, was also one on which the House should have fuller information before it referred this great question of Home Rule to the consideration and decision of the constituencies. For all the reasons he had adduced he appealed to the House to reject the Amendment of the hon. Member.

On the return of the SPEAKER after the usual interval, *MR. H. S. FOSTER (Suffolk, Lowestoft) said, that the hon. Member who had last addressed the House had taken the same melancholy view of the prospects of the Government as the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland and the hon. Member for Louth (Mr. T. M. Healy), had done. All those right hon. and hon. Gentlemen appeared to be agreed that the Dissolution of Parliament and the Government were synonymous, and that a General Election would have the result of bringing the Unionist Party into power. If distress in Ireland were to be apprehended the past conduct of the Leader of the Opposition would be a guarantee that a Unionist Government would be able to cope with it and would show quite as much sympathy with the Irish people in their affliction as a Home Rule Government could do. The hon. Member had made a most pathetic appeal to Her Majesty's Government not to dissolve Parliament. He was not in the confidence of Her Majesty's Ministers, but he could assure the hon. Member that his prayer was granted before it was uttered, because the last thing which the Government desired to do was to dissolve Parliament and to face the people of this country. It was true that the Government belonged to a party whose watchword was, "Trust the people." But if they really did trust the people they certainly had a most singular way of manifesting their confidence in them. He rejoiced that notwithstanding the efforts of the Government to keep Home Rule in the background, the Amendment now before the House would remind the people of the continued existence of what the Unionist Party believed to be a movement most dangerous to the best interests of the Empire. Thepolicy which begat Home Rule was a policy of secrecy. So secretly was the idea generated in the minds of the Liberal Party, that even the most trusted companions and life-long friends of the late Prime Minister knew nothing whatever of his intentions. The writings of the present President of the Board of Trade afforded one instance. He, as recently as 1886, wrote with regard to the threatened desertion of Ulster—

> "Those who know the people of Ulster best will be the first to agree that the passionate protests which come thick and fast from them against being left to the mercy of an Irish Parliament are well entitled to respect."

The moment that proposal was laid on the Table of the House of Commons it was rejected—first by the House, and then by the country, in 1886. From that year down to 1892 the Liberal Party again pursued that policy of secrecy which the Opposition maintained they were still attempting to pursue to-day. Although very many efforts were made to draw from them a declaration of their policy with regard to Home Rule, those demands were in vain. The hon. and learned Member for Waterford quoted that evening from a speech delivered by the Home Secretary; but the hon. Member stopped short, for the Home Secretary went on to say that if his Party were returned to power, and if they passed a Home Rule Bill, the House of Lords would reject the Bill on the ground that the Liberal Party had no mandate from the people, and he added that the House of Lords would be justified. This was what had happened. The Home Rule Bill had been rejected by the House of Lords, and the manifest intention of the Government had been to avoid an issue with the House of Lords and with the Unionist Party upon what was, admittedly, a grave constitutional question, or to submit the question to the judgment of the people. The Mover of the Amendment showed that the Liberal Party had claimed for this question supreme importance and urgency, but he did not carry the House down to the claims most recently made with regard to the last Home Rule Bill, to which, as the House had been told by the Chief Secretary that night, the Liberal Party were pledged as the very minimum of Irish demands. The House would remember the occasion of the introduction of the last Home Rule Bill. In the course of the speech of the late Prime Minister, the right hon. Gentleman said he wished the Bill were more worthy of its object, for its object was certainly, he said, a very lofty one, being no less than to remove the stain of an old and inveterate dishonour from the fair fame of England. But was it true that this country was, at the present moment, labouring under the stain of an old and an inveterate dishonour? If that were so, and if the Home Rule Bill were meant to remove that stain in 1893, how came it they were in 1895 without any attempt being again made to remove it? Was Local Veto, or One Man One Vote, or Payment of Members of Parliament, to compare in importance with removing from this country the stain of an old and inveterate dishonour? On the 29th of June, 1893, when the late Prime Minister was bringing forward the Resolution for closuring the Home Rule Bill, he stated that it was with real pain that he made that Motion. He also said that to deal with this measure was the mission they had received from their constituents, and that, unless they did all they could to pass it, they would return as a disgraced majority to their constituents. It was no stretch of the imagination to say that, in the view of the Government, that was the position which they occupied at the present moment. It was, therefore, not surprising that the Unionist Party were going to vote in favour of putting that issue plainly before the electors of this country. He and his Party believed that England was as deeply concerned in this question as Ireland. He rejoiced that this question had been raised, and that the electors would be forcibly reminded by the events of to-night that it was the Unionist Party that were desirous of putting a plain issue before them, and that it was the Members of the Government who were desirous of obscuring that issue. He listened with regret to the insinuation of the Chief Secretary. The right hon. Gentleman was, he thought, like Mrs. Candour, in *The School for Scandal*, who, after making all sorts of insinuations, said: "Not that I believe them." The Chief Secretary assured them that, in his belief, it was their firm duty to carry forward this measure of Home Rule. Then why did not the Government nail their colours to the mast if they believed that? The Government were only gilding the pill in order that the British elector might be induced to swallow the noxious compound. He thought that some of the remarks of the Chief Secretary that night appeared like a veiled threat to the hon. Member for Waterford. The Chief Secretary said: "Remember, friendship should be met with friendship." The Chief Secretary left it there, and did not pursue the argument further. He understood that remark to convey that, if the Parnellites were going to turn round, and make things uncomfortable for the Government, English and Scotch and Welsh Members might hereafter turn round and vote against Home Rule. If that were so, how did that friendship, of which the Chief Secretary spoke, come into consideration? He trusted that Home Rule would be the chief issue at the next General Election, and agreed with the hon. and learned Member who had moved the Amendment, although of course wholly opposed to him on the question of Home Rule, that the right and just course to take was to submit the question to the arbitrament of the electorate at the earliest moment.

MR. W. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick) desired to repudiate on the part of the Party with which he had the honour to be associated any confederacy with the Conservatives. The idea of such a confederacy had never entered their minds. Hon. Gentlemen who taunted himself and his friends with inconsistency appeared to be ignorant of the fact that they claimed to be following the lead of the right hon. Member for Midlothian, whose idea, unless rumour was entirely wrong, was to go to the country on the issue of Home Rule. The right hon. Member believed with the late Mr. Parnell that Home Rule was the only platform upon which all Liberals could stand together, and when the majority of his Ministry disagreed from him on that point he retired, leaving the management of affairs to those who differed from his policy. The existing Democratic Ministry had chosen a Peer for a Premier; and one of the first public statements of that noble Lord was, that he was not an enthusiastic witness for Home Rule. Yet Parnellites were asked to believe that a Ministry held by a Peer, who had made such a statement as that, were in earnest about carrying a Home Rule measure. In the Speech from the Throne no reference whatever was made to the policy of agitation against the House of Lords. Personally he had no belief in the political worth of a body of hereditary legislators, but he did not understand how Ministers could ask for support for a Programme, as to which they were not in earnest and were divided among themselves. They were asked to support the Government on the ground, among others, that an Irish Land Bill was promised. He wished to know whether this Bill was to be used as a kind of decoy, just as the Evicted Tenants Bill was last year, with the object of keeping a number of Irishmen in attendance to assist the Government in passing British measures. He was as much in favour of a Land Bill as any other Irishman—in fact he had suffered himself from felonious landlordism—but he could not approve a policy of holding out an Irish Land Bill as a kind of bait to insure the attendance of Irish Members and their support of British Bills. He had been sent to the House as a Home Ruler, and he put Irish Home Rule before any other question, and it was in the hope that Home Rule might regain the position which it occupied in the past that he should vote for the Amendment of his hon. and learned Friend. There were other Irish questions besides the Land question that demanded attention from the Government. The agricultural tenants were not alone in having a grievance; the town tenants suffered also from insecurity of tenure. He had presented petitions from 40 places in Ireland praying relief from insecurity of tenure in towns, and yet the Government had refused to assist him to pass a measure for granting such relief. There were also questions of the Irish mails, of harbours, of Dublin drainage, of a veterinary college, and others—with respect to all of which promises had been made and nothing done. The practical benefits to Ireland of what was called a Home Rule Government had hitherto been very insignificant. The hon. and learned Member for Louth, in referring to the Irish political prisoners, had called them "dynamite" prisoners. He wished to protest against such a description. The men were tried under the Treason Felony Act, which was specially passed by the House in order to make it easy to convict Irishmen upon any charge whatsoever, and they were therefore political prisoners, and ought not to be described in any other way. If the Party to which the hon. and learned Member for South Waterford were, as he had said, in the habit of obtaining a *quid pro quo* for their votes, why did they not ask that at least £1,000,000 out of £20,000,000 voted last year in aid of the Navy should be spent in Ireland? The Chief Secretary was apparently always in fear of the Treasury and the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and when money was wanted all the fine promises made by the right hon. Gentleman came to nothing. He had received a number of complaints from those who were in Government situations in Ireland, and others, of the parsimony practised in Ireland by the Government. In the Board of Works in Kingstown 35 poor men were dismissed at the beginning of the winter without the customary honorarium. The whole policy of the Government was to extract as much as they possibly could from Ireland, and to expend as much as they possibly could in England. He would be glad to have an official contradiction if that were not the case. The Independent Party were perfectly honest in intention, and had no confederacy whatever with the Tories. They were the sternest upholders of Home Rule; but they desired to see it definitely placed before the country, and did not want to enter into a long conflict with the House of Lords which might take half a generation. They had had in Ireland, where most things were possible, a revolution headed by a Lord, but he had been an outlaw, and neither a millionaire nor a Minister, and it would be a new development in history when a millionaire Minister donned the red cap and commenced a revolution, and one for which they did not wish to wait. Whenever Ministers showed that they were quite in earnest about bringing Home Rule to the front the Independent Party would be just as strenuous in their support as they now were in opposition. He trusted that in the immediate future the policy of parsimony, promise, and procrastination, which had been the main feature of the so-called Home Rule Government in Ireland would be abandoned. He urged the Government to go to the country, in order that the issue should be definitely determined by the electorate.

*MAJOR E. R. JONES (Carmarthen) said, that if it were not for the serious consequences to Home Rule which might follow from the Division on the present Amendment, the present situation might be looked upon, not only as funny, but as positively ludicrous. They had on the same side men who were sworn to the principle of Home Rule, and men who were sworn against it, fighting side by side for the defeat of the Government which was pledged to that great measure He could not understand the suspicion and distrust which characterised his hon. Friend the Member for Waterford and those associated with him. They had received every possible assurance. His right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland had quoted the words of the Prime Minister; and the Chief Secretary himself, speaking in Ireland and to Irishmen, said that he "had nailed the green flag to the mast." Even if that were not sufficient, the meeting of the Liberal Party which was held a few weeks ago at Cardiff pledged itself again to the great principle of Home Rule, declaring that it should be still the great and leading principle of the Liberal Party in this country. The hon. Member for Waterford knew perfectly the situation; for nearly a quarter of a century the people of Wales had sent up their Representatives to demand the principle of religious equality for the Principality. They had striven hard to this end in Wales, especially since the people had been free to speak their minds, under the protection of the Ballot, without fear of being evicted from their homes, and ever since that time they had sent, in increasing numbers, to the House men who asked for religious equality. The figures in the Principality were in the proportion of ten to one in favour of it. They had at first drawn an evanescent hope from a speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition, in which he had commended very heartily religious education on the Voluntary principle; but very soon their hopes had been overthrown by the well known arguments and denunciations of those who generally acted with him, and which he adopted in his Manchester speech. They had been assigned the second place in the Newcastle Programme by the great Liberal Party, and at every successive meeting of the Liberal Party in the country the same place had been given them, and they felt that, whatever Unionists might do, they were safe in turning for support to their Irish friends. The people of Ireland and Wales sprang from the same stock. The hon. Member for the Harbour Division said he would not have any sympathy with the cause of Disestablishment in Wales because the Welsh Members were to blame for the Home Rule Bill not having been again brought forward. Welsh Members, however, might ask him, on the score of service rendered to the cause of Ireland, to think twice before defeating a Government which was pledged, after full inquiry and examination, to give Wales a Disestablishment Bill. They did all they could to give religious equality to Ireland and to forward the Land Act of 1870, and when it was sought to exclude Ireland from the operation of the Ballot Act, again they did what service they could for Ireland. They helped forward the Compensation for Disturbance Bill in 1880, the Land Act of 1881, the Arrears Act of 1882, and the Extension of the Franchise in 1884; and in 1886, when an important section of the Liberal Party withdrew from the flag, taking much of the ability, and more of the wealth, of the Party with them, the Welsh were true to the cause of Ireland. Their fidelity in this regard had never been denied. He appealed to Irish Members if Wales had not been true from first to last, and it ill-became the hon. Member for the Harbour Division to lay any blame of any kind upon the Welsh Representatives. More than that, he asserted that nowhere amongst the Irish electors residing in the United Kingdom would the Amendment proposed by the hon. Member for Waterford find a single echo. If the case were fairly put before the Irish electors from Giants Causeway to Cape Clear, nowhere would the hon. Member find any sympathy for the cruel thing he was attempting to do to-night. On other fields than this he had played a small part with Irishmen. He had seen the Irish brigade fighting the men of Virginia for the freedom of the slave, but they did not desert their colours in the face of the enemy, nor turn their fire upon their comrades in arms.

Mr. R. G. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.) failed to see the relevance of a great proportion of the remarks of the hon. Member. But though he did not agree with the hon. Member for Waterford in many things, he agreed with his Amendment. For there was a great constitutional aspect to this question. When the House of Lords decided not to accept the first Reform Bill, what was the action of the Government of the day? Their action was to dissolve Parliament, for the Members to go to their constituents and ask for the Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill. He was the descendant of the representative of a constituency that had been heard of a good deal lately—the constituency of Forfarshire. The constituencies pronounced for the Bill, and the Whigs came back in a majority. In the case of the Home Rule Bill, thrown out by the Lords, the present Government had not considered it desirable to take the opinion of the people. He thought it was their duty to do so. The country ought to have the opportunity of deciding whether the Union was to be maintained or not. When the Member for Midlothian retired, how did the new Prime Minister allude to this question? In one of the first speeches he made Lord Rosebery said that Home Rule ought to be decided by the predominant partner. Well, England was the predominant partner in this question, and when one considered the tremendous taxation which had to be borne by the English people, and especially by London—because London paid more to the Imperial Exchequer in rates and taxes than all Ireland—they were entitled to claim that the Unionist Party had the vast majority of votes. He intended to support the Motion, but, on the other hand, he did not agree with the hon. Member's views as regarded Separation; still, the constituencies should be enabled to decide whether the present majority was right, or whether the Unionist Party was right. He knew that in other countries they had various ways of deciding between Union and Separation. Our brethren beyond sea, when the question of Separation came before them, had to resort, unfortunately, to arms. He recollected that on the great American Continent the firm determination of a united people was to stand by the Union. The same spirit, he believed, animated the people of this country. Probably they would not have occasion to defend the Union of the United Kingdom by force of arms, but, at any rate, he did not see why they should not have the opportunity of doing this by the Ballot Box. A large number of those who once belonged to the Liberal Party had, since the introduction of the Home Rule question joined the Unionist Party, and he contended that where a Party was torn asunder by differences of opinion on any particular question that question ought to be submitted to the country for decision. He was perfectly certain that if an appeal was made to the country the verdict would be in favour of the maintenance of the Union.

*MR. J. G. **WEIR** (Ross and Cromarty) said, he would appeal to the hon. and learned Member for Waterford and his colleagues to withdraw the Amendment, and he did so because it was perfectly clear that he would not succeed in carrying it, and that the continuance of the Debate would only delay urgent public business. Many Members were anxious to have an opportunity of bringing forward Bills, but they would be deprived of the chance of doing so if the time of the House were occupied in discussing Amendments, the objects of which could not be attained. The Highland Members, for instance, were anxious that the Bill for the Amendment of the Crofters' Act should be brought forward. They were now almost within reach of it, and he begged the hon. Member not to jeopardise their chance by pressing the Amendment. There were, too, large sums of money to be expended on the Army and Navy, and in other directions as well, and it was very important that the time of the House should be economised as far as possible so that hon. Members might have an opportunity of examining and criticising this expenditure at a reasonable time of the Session. The people of the Highlands had been true and faithful to the cause of the Irish people, and he was surprised that at a time like this any section, however small, of the Irish Nationalists should practically desert the Crofters by adopting a course which would stand in the way of the speedy realisation of their hopes. Even if they continued to pursue that course they would not succeed, for the Government were sure of a round dozen under any circumstances. But if the Government only had a majority of two, they would, as the Prime Minister had stated, still go on with the Business of the Nation. He earnestly hoped that the Government would show some courage in the conduct of Business, and would not hesitate to follow the example of their predecessors by a drastic application of the Closure. With respect to the Crofters' Bill, he assured the Government that if it were not facilitated there would be troubles ahead, and the Highland Members would do their utmost to make the lives of Ministers intolerable.

COLONEL **SAUNDERSON** (Armagh, N.) said, the Debate, so far as it had gone, had been remarkable for the admission, by both the Chief Secretary and the hon. Member for Waterford, that an appeal to the country would be fatal to the continuance of the present Government in Office. The hon. and learned Member for Louth, too, in his speech seemed to agree with this statement, and in the course of his speech he paid a high compliment to the Leader of the Opposition; for, having admitted that the present Government would be excluded from Office by an appeal to the country, he assumed that the Unionist Government would be in office the full term of seven years, so admirable would be their administration. For the first time in the House of Commons, as far as he was aware, a Member had had the courage to get up and say that he and his Party—whatever that Party might be—were on sale. The main accusation which the hon. and learned Member for Louth hurled against the hon. and learned Member for Waterford was, that he had not sold himself for a price. He said that the hon. and learned Member did not even ask for 6d. to be taken off the Whisky Tax. Was that the price of the hon. and learned Member for Louth? After this he thought he might well leave the hon. Member and his Party to the judgment of all honest men. In regard to the speech of the hon. and learned Member for Waterford, he might say that there were no two men in the world who differed more absolutely in their political opinions than they did; and yet on this occasion he should support the hon. and learned Member, for the reasons which he would explain, and he hoped the whole of the Unionist party would also go into the Lobby with him. With one part of the speech of the hon. Member for Waterford he disagreed. The hon. Gentleman blamed the Government for their action after the defeat of the Home Rule Bill, and that was one of the principal accusations he hurled at his former friends. They all remembered what happened. No man who took part in the discussion on the Home Rule Bill could ever forget it. They talked by the month, they walked through the division Lobby for miles; and after having discussed this measure and threshed it out, exposing it in all its malformity, it went to another place where it was treated with scant courtesy. He did not suppose in all the record of Parliamentary history there was a case that at all compared with the way that Bill was treated in the House of Lords. It was a Bill that took up the most part of the Session, which was debated with great ability and sometimes with ferocity, and yet it only took four days to debate it and to turn it out from the House of Lords. What he wanted to point out to the hon. Member for Waterford was, that if the Home Rule Bill had been a Bill that had any backing at all in the country, if the electors to any large extent had formed an attachment to the principles of that Bill, there would have been an outcry in Great Britain that nothing could have stopped. The hon. Member for Waterford blamed the Government because, after this Bill, which they had debated so long in the Commons, had been treated with such contempt by the other House, they did not immediately start an agitation similar to that on the Reform Bill of 1832, on Catholic Emancipation, the Repeal of the Corn Laws, and the Reform Bill of 1884. The Chief Secretary forgot to speak on that point, and he should, therefore, take up the cudgels for the right hon. Gentleman. He did not wonder, after the scarcely veiled threats uttered in that House by distinguished statesmen as to what would happen if the Lords ventured to throw out the Home Rule Bill, that the hon Member for Waterford and his party felt surprised that the Government did not take up the cudgels and terrorise the House of Lords, as, undoubtedly, if the whole voice of the country had been in favour of Home Rule, they could have done. He ventured to say he had no doubt at all that if the Government could have done it they would have done. He did not blame them at all, knowing as they did that, so far from the Home Rule Bill having sunk deep into the affections of the country, nobody really cared twopence about it. Not only in Great Britain had they no great public manifestation on the part of the people that they were enraged at the House of Lords for the way in which they had treated the Bill, but in Ireland, where Home Rule was supposed to be the very essence of the aspirations of the people, there was no agitation. It all fizzled out, and he remembered reading a speech by the hon. Member for Waterford himself in which he said that, if they considered the apathy that existed in England and Ireland with regard to the rejection of the Home

Rule Bill, it would appear as if nobody cared for it at all. He entirely agreed with the hon. and learned Member. He had often said in that House that there was a most exaggerated importance placed upon the feelings not only of the British, but of the Irish, people concerning it; and if he wanted to prove this statement he had only to refer hon. Gentlemen to speeches made in Ireland by the Leaders of the Home Rule Party themselves. So long as they were able to show that Home Rule in Ireland meant the acquirement, practically for nothing, of other men's property, then he would admit that Home Rule was popular in that country. But since that time a great deal had been done for Ireland. This country had been generous to Ireland; they had displayed more generosity than, perhaps, any other Parliament or country in the world; the Irish people were not blind to these things, and they naturally asked themselves what, after all, would they gain by placing the supreme authority in Ireland in the hands of the hon. Gentlemen who sat below the Gangway. Therefore he did not blame the Government for not having attempted to initiate an agitation against the House of Lords for rejecting the Home Rule Bill. What the hon. Member for Waterford forgot was, that the popularity of Home Rule in this country entirely depended upon the position, the influence, and the vast ability of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian, and when he was removed from the scene, the name with which they conjured departed for ever. He intended to support the Amendment, because he agreed with the hon. and learned Member for Waterford that it was desirable to ascertain as soon as they could exactly how they stood on this question. Speaking as an Irishman, he felt it was disastrous to the best interests of Ireland to keep a question like this perpetually hanging over their heads. What Ireland required more than anything else was rest and peace, and unless political Parties ceased to use Ireland simply as a makeweight in political warfare he feared the prospects of peace were very remote. But his main reason for voting with the hon. and learned Member was his belief that the result of an appeal to the British constituencies would be an answer so clear and distinct—and that was the view shared by the Government—that this painful policy would be shelved at any rate during the lifetime of all who now sat between these walls. He had some hopes that if Irishmen realised that it was impossible again to bring forward the Home Rule policy, they might learn to forget and forgive, and might join together to promote the peace and happiness of their country He confessed that the Session so far had been a disappointment to him. Lord Rosebery had informed the country that he was about to undertake the initiation of the greatest and most formidable agitation that the country had seen in 200 years, adding that it would require all the effort and courage and determination of the Radical Perty. He accordingly expected when he came down to the House to find the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his shirt-sleeves; but, so far from the revolutionary programme described in the Bradford and Glasgow speeches, he never saw a quieter or tamer Queen's Speech submitted to Parliament. The policy of the Government might be described as the policy of the three P's—plundering churches, plundering landlords, and, if time admitted, plundering publicans. He alluded to the general policy of the Government because they were informed that the measures to be dealt with this Session were really part of the Home Rule policy. Lord Rosebery said that, so long as the House of Lords existed, it would be impossible to carry a Home Rule Bill, and they were therefore to be asked to examine and debate Bills which were brought in, not to pass, but simply to act as Home Rule battering-rams to drive the impediment which the House of Lords offered out of the way of Home Rule. He objected to that policy, not only on account of its evil effect on Ireland, but because it would degrade Parliament to the position of a debating society. They were asked to spend six months' hard labour at political shot-drill in the House of Commons, and when they had debated Welsh Disestablishment, the Land Bill, and the Local Veto Bill, these measures were to be sent to another place so flavoured as to cause the Peers to throw them out without delay. That was the occupation in which they were to be engaged during this Session. He looked upon such a Session with absolute horror. To have to debate Bills that were not intended to pass was insufferable and degrading to the House of Commons. He took it the country had been challenged to compare the House of Commons with the House of Lords, and he believed hon. Gentlemen opposite would be rather surprised by the verdict the country would give as to which assembly merited most honour in their estimation. If the Government were a strong Government some excuse might be found for them, but for a tottering Government to reel through this Session, depending upon the shaky majority of 12, with a view of carrying measures which would each require, probably, a Session to itself was to ask the House of Commons more than the House of Commons should grant to any Government. He did not estimate the strength of the Government by their majority, but by what they themselves said. He was much struck the other night by a metaphor of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The right hon. Gentleman compared the Leader of the Opposition to a cannon loaded only with powder. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer had read the speeches of his Leader he would never have mentioned a cannon. Speaking about the condition of the Government, Lord Rosebery said—

> "We are like a cannon. We may be compared to a great cannon loaded to the muzzle with ball—ordnance heavy and destructive in their character, but with a perfectly insufficient charge behind them to launch them at the enemy, and what, is more, with a chamber in front."

A chamber in front! He could not conceive a piece of ordnance of a more monstrous character, and when he heard the very eloquent and entertaining speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer he thought if a cannon with a chamber in front went off it would not so much injure the people in front as cause destruction and confusion in the serried ranks behind. There were hon. Members below the Gangway who were disposed to put off Home Rule in order that a cry might be raised against the Upper Chamber. They were satisfied to put off Home Rule until some future day, when after many dissolutions, after many changes of Government, the country might be persuaded to wreck the Second Chamber. The hon. Member for Louth found great fault with the hon. Member for Waterford, because, he said, if they turned out the present Government they would evidently put off the Home Rule question for seven years. He ventured to say that those Home Rulers who trusted to the House of Lords being broken up before Home Rule was carried would have to wait three times seven years. There was a Home Rule flavour about all the measures to be presented to the House this Session. The Land Bill was not intended to pass, indeed the Home Secretary had said he would bet 100 to one it would not pass. It seemed to him that a Minister who brought in a Bill against the passing of which one of his colleagues was prepared to bet 100 to one was trifling with the House of Commons. What was the Land Bill to be? It was simply a Home Rule dodge. It was said it was to satisfy the tenants, but it had other objects. Hon. Members below the Gangway had reiterated their opinion that the chief obstacle in the way of Home Rule was the Irish landlords; "sweep them away and you will get rid of England and English authority for ever." Within the last two months the hon. Member for Cork had said the Land Bill was to be a scorcher. What was meant by a scorcher? He should say a Land Bill that was a scorcher would be a Bill that, in the first place, consumed all the Irish landlords. But was the Land Bill still to be a scorcher? The Chief Secretary had informed them the betting had rather gone down; it was no longer 100 to one but 90 to one, or perhaps 50 to one. He dared the Government to alter the Land Bill. The other day Mr. Davitt, who took a great share in the counsels of the Home Rule Party, delivered a speech in Ireland. Whether that Gentleman was consulted in the framing of the Bill he did not know, but Mr. Davitt used an expression the other day which he commended to Her Majesty's Government; he said—

> "It will be the duty of the Home Rule Members in the House of Commons to make the Government toe the mark."

Fancy the Government being reduced to that condition—a row of recruits at drill under the authority of a Home Rule drill sergeant! They did not know yet—for they had not seen the Land Bill—whether or not the Government had toed the mark, or whether the Bill, to which he and his colleagues were prepared to give a fair and just consideration, provided it did not contain principles subversive of all rights of property in Ireland, was a "scorcher," as was said by the hon. Member for Cork. The Bill was a bait that was being dangled before the eyes of the Ulster farmers. Meetings had been held in Ulster, advocating extreme measures in regard to land; but when he examined the reports of those meetings, and saw who had spoken at them, he found that they were Home Rule meetings. He knew something of the farmers of Ulster, and he ventured to prophesy that if the Bill were a "scorcher," and they opposed it, as they undoubtedly would oppose it if it contained such principles, they need have no fear at all of confronting their constituents in Ulster. He had given his reasons why he meant to support the Amendment of the hon. Member for Waterford. He knew there were some members who thought that if they supported an Amendment, moved by so well-known a Home Ruler as the Member for Waterford, they would lay themselves open to the danger of being thought by their constituents to be in favour of Home Rule. If that were so, he did not envy those hon. Gentlemen their constituencies. He thought a constituency that would thus judge must be a constituency of men of extremely weak brains. But the country would recognise clearly why the Unionist Party supported the hon. Member for Waterford. They certainly desired to turn out the Government. About that they made no disguise. It was only natural in the opponents of the Radical Party. But, more than that, they desired that the Government should be ejected by the vote of the people, and that that vote should be one so clear and so distinct that during their lifetime they never again should have the labour and the trouble and, he might almost say, the horror of repeating the Home Rule Session of two years ago.

MR. E. F. VESEY KNOX (Cavan, W.) said, that as he listened to the speech of the hon. and gallant Member he could not help thinking that the Irish Party was not the only party in the House that was divided. He wondered what the hon. Member for South Tyrone thought of all the allusions to the Land Bill with which that speech was studded. It was said that the Land Bill would be the subject of long debates. They all knew what that meant. Whatever differences Nationalist Members might have had with the hon. Member for South Tyrone, he believed the hon. Member was honestly anxious to see the Land Bill carried into law; and, that being so, the hon. Member must have listened with some apprehensions to those threats of long debates from the hon. and gallant Gentleman. It was absurd to say that the meetings in Ulster, which passed resolutions in favour of the Land Bill, were Home Rule Meetings, because if they were Home Rule meetings they would have meant that a majority of the Protestants of Ireland were on the side of Home Rule. They were Unionist meetings. These meetings passed resolutions calling upon the Unionist Members from Ulster to strengthen the hands of the Chief Secretary for Ireland so as to enable the right hon. Gentleman to carry his Land Bill. Did the Unionist farmers mean, by that, that on the very first available occasion the Unionist Members from Ulster should strike a blow at the Chief Secretary, and by destroying the Government destroy the Land Bill? But he wanted to suggest a reason to Unionist Members why they should pause before going into the Lobby in support of the Resolution, The Resolution concluded with these words, "and submit the question of Home Rule to the electors of the United Kingdom." There was in this Parliament a majority for Home Rule, and if, after the General Election, there was again a majority pledged to Home Rule, would Gentlemen above the Gangway abide by the result? [Mr. Ross: "Will you abide by the result?"] The Home Rule Party would have to abide by it. They had no power in the other House. When the Conservatives got their way at the polls they were powerless in another place. He, therefore, asked the Unionist Party, who could control that other place, would they, after the next General Election, if there were a majority in favour of Home Rule, do all in their power to push the Home Rule Bill through both Houses, and see that the other House abided by the result of the appeal to the people? He should be glad to vote with the hon. Member for Waterford if he received an assurance from the Leaders of the Conservative Party that they were ready to abide by the result of the polls. There were some things in the hon. Member for Waterford's speech with which he agreed. Since the change of Leadership in the Liberal Party there had been some incidents calculated to cause concern to Irish Members. The Prime Minister had, in some of his speeches, seemed to throw cold water on Home Rule; but then he had also thrown cold water on many other of the notions of his followers. He had given a taste of Erastianism to those in favour of Disestablishment; he had referred the Peace Society to Agincourt; and no one had suffered more from him than the hon. Baronet who was associated with Local Veto. So that the Prime Minister had no special animus against the Home Rulers. He suggested to the hon. Member for Waterford that the reason why those whose notions had not been accepted by the Prime Minister with full enthusiasm continued to vote for the Government, was that they knew the sense of the country to be with them, whatever the Leaders might say. He should vote against the hon. Member for Waterford, not on the strength of the declarations of any Minister, but because he believed that the heart of the Liberal Party was still sound on Home Rule, and that the majority of the Liberal Members and their Liberal constituents would not allow the Leaders to throw over Home Rule, even if they wished to do so. He agreed with the hon. Member for the Harbour Division of Dublin, that the Evicted Tenants Bill was not given fair play in the House last Session. It was kept to the last and passed through the House as no other Bill was ever passed before. But, with that warning before them, he was sure that the Government would treat the Land Bill differently. By waiting a little they would find out whether the Land Bill was going to get fair play; and if it appeared that the Committee Stage was to be taken in Committee of the whole House, after the Committee Stage of the Welsh Disestablishment Bill, so that there was no practical hope of its getting through, then it might be the duty of Irish Members to take strong action. At present there were no sufficient grounds for supporting the Amendment.

*Mr. J. A. BRIGHT (Birmingham, Central) said that he was so absolutely and entirely opposed to the hon. Member who moved the Amendment, that he felt great reluctance in doing anything which might have the appearance of agreeing with him, or of joining with those who might be suspected of making any compact with him. But he had decided to go into the Lobby with him, though, he must frankly state, from exactly opposite reasons to those which actuated the hon. Member for Waterford. The hon. Member no doubt desired Home Rule to be at once brought forward again, and believed that there was an overwhelming majority of the British electors in favour of what was called "Justice to Ireland." He himself hoped and believed the very opposite to that, and so equally desired a Dissolution. The country was getting very tired of Home Rule, and many Members of the Liberal Party shared the feeling. The Home Rule Bill passed the House of Commons in a form very different from that which was expected by the voters who returned a small majority in its favour; and henceforward they would not look on the question as they did before the General Election, when they had nothing but vague promises of Home Rule. A great many Liberal electors, too, were disgusted with the personal squabbles which obscured what patriotism there was in the Party most interested in Home Rule. Having driven out of the camp men like himself, who were, and always would be, Liberals, it was surely time for the Government to appeal to the country, and either carry Home Rule or else drop it. If the country were eager for Home Rule, why not consult it? The question of Home Rule was entitled to precedence even over the question of the relations between the two Houses of Parliament. He believed that the electors of the country were very dissatisfied with the way in which the Home Rule question had been thrust upon them, and he knew that many supporters of the Government were very dissatisfied. He thought that freedom of opinion in the Liberal Party would before long have to be allowed, that a kind of local option would be permitted as to whether the

Government supporters agreed with the policy of Home Rule or not, or whether they would leave it out of the programme and agree to join and work together with other Liberals on behalf of other Measures which many had more at heart. He would support the Amendment of the hon. Member.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.) complained that some time ago at Newcastle the Chief Secretary spoke in what he must describe as a sneering way with regard to the Party to which he belonged. The right hon. Gentleman lectured him and his Friends and dared them to take the action which they might consider it to be their duty to take. He trusted that the Chief Secretary would give himself and his hon. Friends the credit for acting in this matter, as well as on other questions, in accordance with what they believed to be the interests of the Irish people whom they represented. The right hon. Gentleman had declared that their action that evening was not the action of patriots. He said it in no offensive spirit, but he could not help thinking that it was really impertinent of the right hon. Gentleman to lecture the Irish Members on what their attitude on Irish patriotism should be. All his life he had been brought up to consider that the worst possible quarter to which an Irishman could look for trustworthy instruction with regard to patriotism was an English quarter. Whenever he heard the view of an Englishman with regard to Irish patriotism his instinct invariably induced him to take an opposite course. Then the hon. Member for Louth spoke in a sneering way of the alliance of his hon. Friends with the Tory Party. The Leader of the Opposition had truthfully declared that there was no alliance. As far as he was concerned he had no alliance or connection with any Party in the House or in the country. He had been sent to Parliament to represent his constituents and to speak and vote for what he thought was right in their interests, and he should only give his support to that Party which was doing what he thought ought to be done to further the cause of Ireland. The hon. Member for Louth also said that Irish Members in gratitude ought to support the authors and the items of the Newcastle Programme. If he wanted a lecture on gratitude he would not go to the hon. Member for Louth, who, undoubtedly, did not in the popular mind of Ireland stand out as a great authority on the subject of gratitude. It was not worthy in any section of the House to claim the gratitude of the Irish people for action with regard to Home Rule, when they knew that the policy adopted was simply a measure of justice and reparation to the Irish people for past wrongs. No doubt the Welsh people were entitled to have their Disestablishment Bill. The subject was pressing, but the Irish Land Question was still more pressing. The Irish Evicted Tenants on the road-side constituted a greater claim on the attention of that House than the demand of the Welsh people to be relieved from the Church. He admired the Welsh Members for having forced their question to the front, but 80 Irish Members ought to have more influence with the Government than 30 Welshmen. There was really nothing to be said by way of excuse for the Government in failing to introduce a Bill to re-instate the Evicted Tenants. The Chief Secretary knew very well that when the House went into Committee on the Welsh Bill, it would be nonsense to talk of passing an Irish Land Bill. Even now, if the Government would say that they would give the Evicted Tenants Bill a foremost place, it would make him hesitate as to voting for the Amendment, but to talk about the Land Bill after the Welsh Bill was a hollow mockery. When the Evicted Tenants Bill was before the House it did not get fair play. He did not say that the fault of allowing the Welsh Bill to go ahead of the Irish Land Bill was altogether that of the Government. The Irish Members were to blame for allowing the troublesome Welshmen to compel the Government to look after them first. He did not know what the Tory Party would do if they came into Office, but this he knew, they could not do less than the present Government had done for Ireland. Up to the passing of the Home Rule Bill he gave the Chief Secretary thanks, but he dated his objection to the policy of the Government from the period when they dropped the Bill without saying one word. The hon. Member for Louth asked him, if the Tory Party came into power, if they would release the men the hon. Member had the shamefacedness to call dynamiters—he supposed the hon. Gentleman meant the Irish political prisoners. He did not know whether the Tory Party would release them or not, but one thing he knew, the Tory Party did not lead the Irish people to believe they would release them. They did not send hired representatives to Ireland to talk to the masses about amnesty, and then when they came into power, tell them there was to be no amnesty. The Chief Secretary had given his explanation of that matter, and he had given him credit as far as he could for that explanation; but no Irishman, Tory or Whig, Nationalist or Parnellite, could deny that for any man to speak to Irishmen of amnesty could only convey the idea that amnesty would be granted. He did not know whether the Tory Party would grant amnesty or not, whether they would deal with a Land Bill or not, or whether they would be better than the Party now in power or not. All he could say was, that when the Tory Party was in power before, and did not do what the Irish people thought they ought to do, he took his humble share against them; and he told them that night, that if they came into power again and refused to do justice to Ireland, he would work heart and soul to put them out of office. Of course, he did not profess to be anything in the shape of a profound politician, but he was profound enough to stick to a good thing when he found it. He stuck to Parnell because he thought he was the best man. At any rate, he would stick to Parnell's principle, that Ireland should block the way, and that Government after Government should go out until the Irish National Question was settled. Various speakers had spoken of the desires and requirements of the British people. He granted the necessity for many reforms, but Ireland had waited for seven centuries for justice. Local Veto might be required, but it could wait better than the Irish people. All reforms should be made to wait upon Home Rule. Let them carry Home Rule, and the field would be clear for all these measures. He could not, by vote or voice, consent to any policy of shelving Home Rule. The right hon. Gentleman, the Member for Midlothian, told them, and they all drank it in, that the greatest argument in favour of Home Rule was that Ireland blocked the way. That had been completely reversed, and, so far as he was concerned, he would do everything in his power, not out of any ill will to hon. Gentlemen opposite, among whom were many friends of his own, not out of any desire to interfere with their measures of reform, but simply because he believed it to be his duty, as an Irish Nationalist representative, to keep the question of Home Rule to the front in the interests of Ireland. He believed that could only be done by proving to the British people that until the Irish Question was out of the way, it would be impossible for the British masses to enjoy the reforms which they required. The Chief Secretary seemed to think the Parnellite Party would be smashed at the General Election; but it was probable he was very much mistaken. If the Chief Secretary would come to his constituency and deliver a few speeches upon the true inwardness of Irish patriotism they would help him very much; but he was afraid the right hon. Gentleman would be subjected to awkward interruptions by those who wished him to liberate many prisoners from the constituency. But even if he could foresee that he should be defeated at the next Election by as great a majority as the Chief Secretary could desire, he would still take his present course, being convinced that Ireland would never make substantial progress towards freedom as long as her time-honoured cause was allowed to drag behind, and wait upon measures of social reform.

Mr. ELLIOTT LEES (Birkenhead) wished to explain the vote he was going to give. If he thought for one moment there was any alliance or any bond between his Leader and the Mover of the Amendment, he would go into the other Lobby It was a strong thing to say; but he would rather ally himself with the Government than with the constituents of the last speaker who were languishing in gaol. The Mover of the Amendment had given a challenge to the House; he had thrown down the gauntlet and, unlike the Prime Minister, he was prepared to abide the result. The hon. Member believed the country was in favour of Home Rule. On the contrary, he and his Party believed it was not. The hon. Member had appealed to Cæsar, and the explanation of his own vote was—Unto Cæsar let him go.

Sir EDWARD CLARKE (Plymouth) said, he did not think the Debate ought to close, after the speech of the hon. Member for Cavan, without a word being said from the Front Opposition Bench with regard to the question on which they were about to divide. He had no authority to speak for either section of the Unionist Party; but he confessed he listened with much interest to the speech of the hon. Member for Cavan. He was a little surprised that those Members of the Irish Party who were present to support the Government should have been content to accept the championship and the exposition of the hon. Member for Louth, who was not known to be the recognised mouthpiece of the Irish Party. With regard to the speeches of the hon. Members for Cavan and Louth, he said his own personal view was, that when a great constitutional question, such as the establishment of a Legislature for Ireland, with an Executive dependent upon it, had once been raised, it could only be disposed of by a specific decision by the electorate of the United Kingdom. We had one decision upon it in 1886, and from that decision the country, as far as he knew, had never departed. It was true that in 1892 there came to the House a majority in favour of the present Government. In 1893 they had one of the most ingenious Parliamentary manœuvres ever seen, by which the original form of the Home Rule Bill, as then introduced, was changed into a form which would leave Irish Members voting in that House. It succeeded as a means of getting a majority in favour of the Government at a time when there was a little doubt as to the existence of the Government, but from that day to this, as far as he knew, no Minister or supporter of the Ministry had ventured to defend that manœuvre before his constituents. An hon. Member had said that night that he would be content to leave this question to the judgment of the country. For his own part, he had always said that if the country distinctly and clearly decided in favour of Home Rule, it would be the duty of all to endeavour to carry that decision loyally into effect. But he would ask, on the other hand, whether, if the country at the next General Election clearly and distinctly decided against Home Rule, right hon. and hon. Members opposite would break their alliance with hon. Members below the Gangway and would abandon Home Rule as part of their policy? He did not believe that among the courageous statesmen sitting all in a row opposite any one would be found to accept his offer. It was clear, therefore, that challenges, such as those that were held out to them by hon. Members opposite, could carry no weight. By an admirable exhibition of Parliamentary capacity the Home Rule Bill of two years ago had been forced through that House, and it was defeated in the House of Lords. What was it that the Unionist Party had then claimed, and which they justly and reasonably claimed? It was that the decision of the country should be taken upon the issue. The Unionist Party had had long to wait, but the longer they waited the more confident were they of the result. Hon. Members opposite and hon. Members below the Gangway must be aware that Home Rule could never pass unless the judgment of the country were specifically and distinctly pronounced upon the question, and it would be of no avail for the Government to obtain a chance majority by confusing the issue with other matters. He could not understand what practical object the Representatives of the Irish people could have in endeavouring to postpone placing the issue of Home Rule before the country. It was because he felt that the decision of the constituencies would be against Home Rule that he desired that their judgment upon the question should be taken as soon as possible. If the Government were really in earnest, surely they would put Home Rule separately to the constituencies. In that case, if the Government succeeded, they would come back with a force they had sadly lacked in the past; if the election went against them, then he hoped the House would take up the duty, which had been well discharged before, of governing Ireland in a way that would conduce to the peace and prosperity of that country and of this, and to the unity of the Empire.

The House Divided:—Ayes, 236; Noes, 256.—(Division List, No. 2.)

MOTIONS.

HOUSES IN TOWNS (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. W. Field, Bill to amend the Law relating to the tenure of Houses in Towns in Ireland.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 19 February, and to be printed. [Bill 83.]

LANDS VALUATION (SCOTLAND) ACTS.

On Motion of Sir J. Carmichael, Bill to amend the Valuation of Lands (Scotland) Acts.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 19 February, and to be printed. [Bill 84.]

PAYMENT OF JURORS (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. J. Ross, Bill to provide for the payment of Jurors in Ireland, and for other purposes connected therewith.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Friday next, and to be printed. [Bill 85.]

DERELICT VESSELS (REPORTS) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. J. C. Macdona, Bill for the better reporting of Floating Derelicts.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 1st May, and to be printed. [Bill 86.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT (1894) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. C. B. Renshaw, Bill to amend and explain The Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1894.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time To-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 87.]

FOREIGN AND COLONIAL MEAT (MARKING) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Arthur F. Jeffreys, Bill for the purpose of Marking Foreign and Colonial Meat.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday 20th February, and to be printed. [Bill 88.]

OUT-DOOR PROVIDENT RELIEF BILL.

On Motion of Mr. G. C. T. Bartley, Bill to amend the Law relating to Out-door Relief in sickness and widowhood to the Provident Poor.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday 20th March, and to be printed. [Bill 89.]

OCCUPYING TENANTS ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. G. C. T. Bartley, Bill to enable Occupying Tenants of houses and places of business to purchase the Fee Simple of their holdings.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday 20th March, and to be printed. [Bill 90.]

COMPANIES ACTS (REGISTRATION OF DEBENTURES) BILL.

On Motion of Sir A. K. Rollit, Bill to amend the Companies Acts as to the Registration of Debentures and other matters.

Bill presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday 20th February, and to be printed. [Bill 91.]

LIBEL BILL.

On Motion of Sir A. K. Rollit, Bill to amend the Law of Libel.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday 20th February, and to be printed. [Bill 92.]

POST OFFICE (REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE).

Return ordered, "of Revenue and Expenditure of the Post Office for each year from 1869–70 (in substitution for Parliamentary Paper, No. 378, of Session 1893), and an estimate of the same for the year ended the 31st day of March 1895, in the following form:—

Year.	Revenue.				Expenditure.											Percentage of total Expenditure to total Revenue.	Net Revenue.	Net Revenue, after deducting columns 5 and 6.
	Postal receipts.	Extra receipts.	Estimated value of services to other departments.	Total.	Sites and buildings.		Superannuation.	Salaries, wages, &c.	Percentage of salaries, &c. to total Revenue.	Conveyance of mails.	Percentage of conveyance of mails to total Revenue.	Packet service.	Other Expenditure.		Total Expenditure.			
					Purchase.	Erection.							Under Post Office Vote.	Under other votes.				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		9		10	11	12	13		14	15

—(*Mr. Arnold Morley.*)

Return presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 36.]

The House adjourned at Twelve of the Clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, 12th February, 1895.

SOLICITORS' (IRELAND) BILL [H.L.].

Bill to amend and consolidate the Laws relating to Solicitors, and tothe service and indentures of apprentices in Ireland—presented (Lord Macnaghten); read 1ª, and to be printed. (No. 12.)

TRANSFER OF LAND IN ENGLAND [H.L.]

Bill to simplify Titles and to facilitate the Transfer of Land in England—presented (The Lord Chancellor); read 1ª, and to be printed. (No. 13.)

LAW OF INHERITANCE AMENDMENT BILL [H.L.]

Bill to amend the Law of Inheritance to Real Property—presented (The Lord Chancellor); read 1ª, and to be printed. (No. 14.)

House adjourned at Half past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 12th February, 1895.

The House met at Three of the clock.

PETITION.

THE IRISH AMNESTY QUESTION.

THE SPEAKER: My Lord Mayor of Dublin, what have you there?

THE LORD MAYOR OF DUBLIN: I have a Petition from the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of Dublin, which states that several persons, convicted very many years ago upon charges connected with insurrectionary movements in Ireland, were sentenced to imprisonment for life, and after a long series of years, are still confined in penal servitude; that these persons were tried and convicted under circumstances unfavourable to the calm and impartial consideration of their cases, and the possession of explosives was in many instances the element most used to obtain their conviction and aggravate their sentences—sentences very much more severe than those inflicted upon other persons unconnected with any Irish movement, and more recently convicted under the Explosives Act of much more aggravated offences, but sentenced only to short terms of imprisonment and now released; that the almost universal opinion of the Irish people is that, whatever may have been the offences of these persons the punishment they have received is more than ample, and the offences being distinctly of a political character, the prolongation of the punishment will be received as an exhibition of vengeance and a manifestation of race-hatred unworthy of a great nation and a civilised Government. We therefore pray in the name of justice, and for the sake of mercy, and with a view to remove a just cause of discontent among the Irish people, that as these persons, convicted of political offences, guilty though they may have been have been subjected to emple punishment, the sentences inflicted upon them should now be re-considered with a view to their complete remission at an early date; believing that such action if followed by a generous measure of amnesty would remove the impression that the prolongation of punishment would create, that these prisoners are treated with exceptional harshness because they are Irishmen; and would have a most beneficial effect on the minds and feelings of Her Majesty's Irish subjects, and largely conduce to the preservation of peace and order in Ireland.

THE SPEAKER: Let the Petition be brought to the Table.

This was accordingly done, and the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs withdrew.

MR. F. A. O'KEEFFE (Limerick) presented a Petition from the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of Limerick, in favour of the release of the Irish political prisoners, which on the motion of the hon. Member was read by the Clerk at the Table.

FISHING TRADE APPRENTICES.

MR. HENEAGE (Great Grimsby): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether any action has been taken by that Department, on the report of Messrs. Berrington and Davy, in regard to the system of apprenticing boys to the fishing trade; and whether he will present any Papers on the subject to Parliament?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. BRYCE, Aberdeen, S.): Yes, Sir. The form of Indenture under which the Fishing Apprentices are bound has been amended, and I will lay on the Table copies of the new Instructions which have recently been given to the Superintendent of the Mercantile Marine Office at Grimsby, and of the communications which have been made on the subject of those Instructions to the Superintendents at the other Apprentice Ports, and to the Public Bodies interested in the question. I understand from my right hon. Friend that a Circular will also be issued by the Local Government Board to Boards of Guardians with reference to this matter.

THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.

SIR A. K. ROLLIT (Islington, S): I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education whether, and, if so, when, it is intended to introduce a Bill to carry out the recommendations of the Gresham Commission in reference to the University of London?

THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham): The Government propose shortly to introduce a Bill in reference to the University of London in the House of Lords.

TRADE IN IMPORTED MEAT.

SIR H. MAXWELL (Wigton): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he can now state what arrangement, if any, he has come to with the Board of Trade for the regulation of the Trade in Imported Meat, and for the protection of customers against the fraudulent sale of such meat under British description.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. H. GARDNER, Essex, Saffron Walden): Since the hon. Baronet last interrogated me on this subject, the Merchandise Marks (Prosecutions) Act, 1894, has become law. From the representations made to me it appeared doubtful whether the provisions of that Act were fully known to those concerned, and I have accordingly issued an Explanatory Circular on the subject to the various Chambers of Agriculture, Agricultural Societies, and Farmers' Clubs throughout Great Britain. I have certainly no wish that the Act should remain a dead letter so long as any legitimate ground for complaint on the part of home-producers remains; and I will do my best to secure that any cases of fraudulent misrepresentation of the place of origin of agricultural produce, which may be brought to my notice, are dealt with as they deserve.

AUSTRALASIAN FEDERATION.

MR. W. REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, if, as an outcome of the present Conference of Australasian Premiers, the various Australasian Colonies should decide upon a Federal Constitution, Her Majesty's Government will be prepared to introduce an Act for the purpose of enabling such a Federal Constitution being established?

THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR THE COLONIES (MR. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): The question is hypothetical; and Her Majesty's Government cannot state the exact course that they would pursue in the event of the Australian Colonies approaching them on the question of Federation. But this may be said at once that Her Majesty's Government are favourably inclined to the idea of Inter-Australian Federation.

GAMBLING IN WHEAT.

MR. JASPER MORE (Shropshire, Ludlow): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he will ascertain whether it is true that the United States and the German Governments have introduced Bills to put down gambling in fictitious wheat contracts; whether he is aware that the United States Sub-Committees Private Official Report to the Senate on agricultural depression gave gambling in wheat as one of the causes of the artificial fall in prices; whether he would cause copies of the Bills, if introduced, to be laid upon the Table of the House, or the Library of the House; whether they had received any communication from the Governments of the United States, Russia, France, Germany, or any other European country, in reference to such legislation; and, whether they proposed to take any steps to co-operate with foreign Powers in regard to an understanding on this important international question?

*The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. Grey, Northumberland, Berwick): Copies of these Bills are not at present in the possession of Her Majesty's Government, but Her Majesty's Ambassadors at Berlin and Washington are being instructed to obtain copies of them.

Admiral E. FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne): Will the hon. Baronet also oblige by obtaining a copy of a Bill which, I understand, has been introduced by the Belgian Government?

*Sir E. GREY: Yes, Sir, if the hon. Member will give me a reference to it.

LONDON AND PARIS TELEPHONE.

Mr. J. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Postmaster General if he can state the annual revenue and expenditure in connection with the telephone service between London and Paris; whether the telephone is in constant use and worked without cessation, or whether there are long intervals during which it is idle; and, whether he can see his way to make the rate 3s. for three minutes' conversation, instead of 8s. as at present?

*The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. A. Morley, Nottingham, E.): During the business hours of the day the telephone to Paris is in constant use, and I think there can be no doubt that it thoroughly meets a public demand on the part of the classes whose business is facilitated by such a means of communication. The charge is a subject of international agreement, and I do not see my way at present to propose any reduction.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON: Can the right hon. Gentleman state the expenditure and the revenue?

Mr. A. MORLEY: It is so mixed up with the general telephone service of the country that it is difficult to state them separately; but I will give some facts to the hon. Member afterwards.

THEFTS FROM PILLAR-BOXES.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether large numbers of letters are stolen from pillar-boxes; whether he is aware that several mechanical checks which entirely prevent such thefts have been invented, but rejected by the Post Office Department; and whether he will personally examine these inventions, and adopt that which may appear to be effectual for the object in view?

Mr. A. MORLEY: There is no reason to suppose that large numbers of letters are stolen from Post Office pillar letter-boxes. I am aware that many suggestions for mechanical appliances to prevent letters from being taken out of pillar letter-boxes have been examined by the Post Office, but none has been found which would effectually secure the object in view or be free from serious objections.

UNPAID POST CARDS.

*Sir J. LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the Postmaster General, with regard to the fact that when a ½d. stamp is, by inadvertence, neglected to be placed on an Inland post card the charge of 2d. is made on its delivery, whether there is any reason why a fine of 1½d. on the delivery of ½d. post card, although recognised by the Postal Union in the case of Foreign and Colonial postage, should not be reduced in our Inland postage?

Mr. A. MORLEY: A charge of 2d. on the delivery of an unpaid inland card, which, if prepaid, might have been transmitted for ½d., may appear high, but, as I explained in replying to a question from the hon. Member for Canterbury on the 7th inst., prepayment is necessary to constitute a card a post card. When posted unstamped, the card can, under the regulations of the Postal Union, only be dealt with as an unpaid letter, and, in my judgment, it is convenient to apply to Inland post cards, the rules which are enforced throughout the Union in the case of International post cards. I may add that, in other countries where the privilege of using private cards has been conceded, the unstamped card is treated, as it is treated here, as an unpaid letter.

THE TELEPHONE COMPANIES.

Mr. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he has yet received a copy of the resolution passed at the meeting of the City Commissioners of Sewers (the local authority for the City) on the 5th inst., asking him to consent to the draft agreements with the Telephone Companies being sent to a Select Committee for consideration; and whether he is aware that, as a matter of business, the City of London is more interested in this question than any other part of the United Kingdom?

MR. A. MORLEY: Since the hon. Member's question was put on the Notice Paper a copy of the resolution in question has reached me. I am, of course, aware that the question of the telephones must be of great interest to the City of London as well as to the rest of the United Kingdom.

MR. A. C. MORTON: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he can consent to the matter being referred to a Select Committee?

MR. A. MORLEY: I am sorry I can add nothing to what I have already said. The Government consider it is a matter settled by the late Government, and it would not be fair to reopen the question.

AN EVICTED TENANT'S STRAY SHEEP.

MR. JOHN ROCHE (Galway, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the fact that Lord Clanricarde, at the last Killimore Petty Sessions, prosecuted an evicted tenant named Matthew Donohue, for trespass of one sheep on the lands of Heathlawn, in County Galway; and that the Magistrates ordered the defendant to pay £2 as a fine and £1 costs, being double the amount of the value of the sheep; and whether he will consider the expediency of advising the remission of the sentence?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): I am informed by the Constabulary that the Magistrates fined Donohue two pence (not £2 as stated in the question) for the trespass of the sheep, and awarded £1 costs on the application of the prosecuting solicitor. I am advised that the Lord Lieutenant has no power to order a remission of the costs in the case.

MR. J. C. FLYNN (Cork, N.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that a fine of £1 costs is illegal and contrary to the Statute?

[No answer was given.]

VACCINATING FIREMEN AT LIVERPOOL.

MR. C. H. HOPWOOD (Lancashire, S.E., Middleton): I beg to ask the Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the fact of a fire having taken place in the Liverpool Small Pox Hospital, on or about 30th January, and that, the City Fire Brigade having extinguished the fire, it was thereupon insisted that the Fire Superintendent and his 14 men must be, and they were, vaccinated before leaving; and by what law, or by whose authority, was the vaccination enforced?

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Sir WALTER FOSTER, Derby, Ilkeston): The Local Government Board are informed that it was strongly suggested that the officers of the fire brigade who were on duty on the occasion of the fire at the Parkhill Small Pox Hospital should be re-vaccinated in consequence of the serious risk of small pox being contracted by persons who had not been vaccinated or had been improperly vaccinated. The Board are informed that no compulsion was or could be exercised in the matter, that none of the men objected to the operation, and, further, that upwards of 50 policemen who had been in contact with the firemen came of their own free will and asked to be vaccinated.

CAVALRY HORSES.

*SIR C. W. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War how many trained Cavalry horses in all, and how many over five years of age, are on the establishment in England and Wales as attached to the 10 regiments of Cavalry of the Line and 11 depôts stationed in England and Wales; how many officers, warrant officers, and men there are in the same regiments and depôts; whether the effective strength of horses on the British establishment is virtually the same now as it was 20 years ago, in spite of the great increase in the establishment of men in that period and the great increase of horses attached to the

Infantry and Army Service Corps; and whether, in consequence, the horses attached to the Household Cavalry, and to the Cavalry of the Line, Royal Horse Artillery, and Royal Artillery, on the Home establishment, taken together, have decreased within that period?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.): There are 3,712 public horses belonging to the 10 regiments of Cavalry of the Line and 11 depôts stationed in England and Wales. Of these 306 rank as untrained, and 351 are under five years of age. There are 7,019 officers and men in the same corps, but 269 of these are officers, nearly all of whom have private horses. The establishment of horses for all arms on the British establishment, which includes the Colonies, is 268 below that of 1875. For the Household Cavalry, Cavalry of the Line, and Royal Artillery, taken together, serving at home, which is not the same thing as the British establishment, the decrease since 1875 is 2182. It is to be observed, however, the Artillery have now 253 more horses in Egypt and Natal than in 1875. The Cavalry have 258 more horses than in 1875, but 647 of their horses are in Egypt and South Africa; and 54 horses which used to be shown as Cavalry are now shown, where they are used, at the Royal Military College. This accounts for 954—of the apparent decrease the remainder is mainly accounted for by the decrease of Royal Horse Artillery effected some few years ago, and by other Artillery changes.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.) asked whether there were not 13,000 Cavalry Troopers on the strength of the Establishment, and only 8,000 horses on which to mount them?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN replied that he could not say. He could not accept figures he had had no opportunity of revising.

RESIDENT MEDICAL OFFICERS.

MR. J. TULLY (Leitrim, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether the Local Government Board have received resolutions passed recently by the Mohill Board of Guardians, and also by the Rynn Dispensary Committee, requiring Dr. Pentland, the medical officer for Rynn Dispensary District, to reside within his district; and, whether he can state what steps the Local Government Board intend to take to compel this gentleman to reside within his district the same as other Dispensary Medical Officers in Ireland are required to do?

MR. J. MORLEY: Resolutions of the nature indicated have been received by the Local Government Board. The hon. Gentleman will remember that he addressed a question to me on the subject of the residence of Dr. Pentland in May last. Inquiries on the spot were subsequently made into the facts of the case by the Board's Medical Inspector, who stated that Dr. Pentland has a residence at Dromod within his district, where he lives and where all messages are taken in and kept for him when out on duty. This gentleman has also a house in Mohill, where part of his family reside; but the Inspector is of opinion that his residence in Dromod is actual residence within his dispensary district, and, so far as the Local Government Board are aware, Dr. Pentland complies with their rules as to residence.

MR. TULLY asked whether the Chief Secretary had acted on the report of the Inspector or on the resolution passed?

MR. J. MORLEY: I think it would be better if my hon. Friend would bring before me any inconvenience he can show has arisen.

CONDITION OF HOWTH HARBOUR.

MR. J. ROSS (Londonderry): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether it has been brought to his notice that a considerable part of Howth Harbour, frequented by yachts, fishing boats, and trading steamers, is filling fast, and will soon cease to be of use; and whether there is any fund available for the purpose of dredging the harbour?

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT (on behalf of Mr. J. MORLEY): From the position of Howth Harbour some slight accumulation of deposit must necessarily take place, but the effects of the last dredging operations, which were completed only three years ago at an expense of over £8,000, are such that the harbour will for many years amply suffice for accommodating all the trade of the port. Yachts of moderate draft can and do use the eastern side of the harbour in considerable numbers, but racing craft drawing over eight feet might no doubt take the ground at low water of spring tides. For such yachts, however, the neighbouring harbour of Kingstown is at all times available. I am not aware that there is any fund available for the purpose of dredging the harbour beyond the maintenance charge which is borne on the Votes—namely £926 for the current year.

WORKMEN'S WAGES AT SHREWSBURY.

Mr. H. D. GREENE (Shrewsbury): I beg to ask the Postmaster General, whether the painting work in connection with post offices at Shrewsbury has been let by contract, and whether the workmen, or any of them employed during the last four months in such work, have been paid wages below the rate of wages usually paid for such work in the locality, or below the wages generally accepted as current in the trade for competent workmen; and whether, having regard to the Resolution of this House of the 13th of February, 1891, the Government will take any steps in regard to the matter?

The FIRST COMMISSIONER of WORKS (Hr. H. J. Gladstone, Leeds, W.): This is a question which concerns my Department. The Board of Works have only small and occasional amounts of work at Shrewsbury. Such work as there is, like the painting of the post office, is performed by one of the principal tradesmen in the town, on a schedule of prices. From inquiries made, it appears that the prices paid to the contractor, which were fixed some years ago, are scarcely sufficient to enable him in all cases to pay full rates. Now that my attention has been called to the matter, I have given instructions for fresh terms to be arranged with the contractor on the basis of an undertaking on his part to pay full wages in all trades.

COPYRIGHT IN CANADA.

Mr. BIRKMYRE (Ayr District): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, whether he has seen a telegram from the *Times* correspondent, at Ottawa, which was published on the 8th of this month, in which members of the Canadian Government declare that the Act constituting Canada a Dominion empowered the Dominion Parliament to appropriate by legislation the Copyright of authors in all parts of the Empire outside of Canada, and to abrogate the protection afforded to these authors by Imperial legislation; whether the Secretary of State for the Colonies will refuse to advise the Crown to assent to such an Act; and, whether the Secretary of State will insist as a condition precedent for advising assent being given to any Copyright Act passed by the Dominion Parliament, that a clause be inserted to the effect that the consent of the author whose Copyright a Canadian publisher desires to appropriate shall first be given by him.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: The late Sir J. Thompson was in personal communication with the Secretary of State, on the subject of Canadian Copyright, when his lamented death put an end for the time being to the communications, and I cannot at present make any statement on the subject.

POSTMEN'S HOLIDAYS.

Sir A. K. ROLLIT: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is aware that, in several post offices in London, holidays are not confined within eight months as promised by Mr. Raikes when Postmaster General, but that in some cases the period extends to nine months and even more; whether he promised the staff some time ago that the period of eight months should not be extended except where its limitation would cause great inconvenience, and that even then the extension should not be more than by a few days; and, whether he will now give instructions that, subject as above, the holidays shall be confined to within eight months of the year?

Mr. A. MORLEY: I have ascertained that in the case of the London Sorting Force and Postmen, Mr. Raikes undertook to restrict the annual leave within eight months of the year, and, as far as I can ascertain, this has practically been done ever since, though in some cases it has been necessary that the leave should commence a few days before the 31st March and end a few days after the 31st October.

RELIEF WORKS IN IRELAND.

Mr. P. A. M'HUGH (Leitrim, North): I beg to ask the Chief

Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Carrick-on-Shannon Board of Guardians adopted a resolution calling for relief works in the parish of Ballinaglera owing to the pressing distress existing in that district, and specifying as practicable and useful the completion of roads commenced in 1879 and left unfinished; and, will he take steps to give effect to the resolution of the Board referred to, with a view to alleviating to some extent the present condition of the inhabitants of that parish?

MR. J. MORLEY: I have seen a copy of the resolution referred to. The Local Government Board have directed their Inspector to visit the district, and report to them as to the actual condition of the people. I hope to have the Inspector's Report at the end of the week.

THE DISTRESS IN IRELAND.

MR. P. A. M'HUGH: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that intense distress exists in the scheduled districts of North Leitrim, owing to the failure of the potato crop last year and other causes; can he state the amount expended by the Congested Districts Board for inspections of, and reports on, the condition of North Leitrim, and the amount expended by that Board towards the relief of distress in, and the permanent improvement of, the scheduled districts in that Parliamentary constituency; and, what steps does he propose taking to avert starvation in North Leitrim during the coming Spring and Summer?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Local Government Board inform me that no reports have been received from their Inspector, with whom they are in frequent communication, as to the existence of severe distress in North Leitrim. The Board inform me that the numbers on relief in this district are now considerably below the numbers at the corresponding period of last year, and that the poor rates are moderate. It would not be practicable to allocate the cost of local inquiries made by the Congested Districts Board in any one district. Grants amounting to £102 have been made by the Board towards the knitting and shirt-making industries at Ballyshannon (which district includes part of North Leitrim), and arrangements are being made to rent premises and pay teachers at the same place, in connection with the shirt-making industry. A loan of £200 has also been made for the development of the straw-bottle envelope industry at Kiltyclogher, and some bulls and boars have been sent to the district under the Board's Agricultural Scheme.

DISTRESS IN IRISH TOWNS.

MR. CRILLY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, if it has been brought under his notice that, owing to the widespread prevalence of distress in the towns of the West of Ireland, a Relief Committee, under the Chairmanship of his Lordship, the most Rev. Dr. Comny, Bshop of Killala, has been formed in Ballina, and that a large sum collected in the town has been distributed to meet the existing local distress; whether reports have reached him from the Local Government Board authorities informing him that similar distress prevails in other western towns; and, whether, seeing that the distribution of seed potatoes and the opening or repairing of rural roads will be ineffectual in meeting the wants of the urban poor, the Government will give its immediate attention to the necessity of providing relief for the distress existing in these western towns.

MR. MORLEY: Distress amongst labourers in towns is, I regret to say. not confined to the west of Ireland, The relief works started this year are only intended to meet the distress caused among small land-owners by reason of the failure of the potato crop.

*MR. CRILLY (Mayo, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he has received resolutions or representations of public meetings or public boards from Belmullet, Killala, Bangor-Erris, and Ballycastle, all in the electoral division of North Mayo, declaring that acute distress existed in these several localities, and calling on the Government to institute relief works; and, if he is prepared to state what measures, if any, the authorities have decided upon to cope with the destitution pointed to in these resolutions and representations? Also if, in estimating the extent and severity of the distress existing in Mayo, he has relied mainly on the Reports of the Local Government Board Inspectors; whether, in order to quicken the preparation and completion of these Reports, any additional Inspectors from the existing staff have been sent to Mayo; and, whether he is in a position to say that the various districts in the Ballina, Killala, and Belmullet Unions, in which it is alleged distress exists, have been visited and reported upon by the Inspectors of the Local Government Board?

*MR. MORLEY: Reports relative to distress, or apprehended distress, in the west of Ireland have been fairly made to Government by the police and resident magistrates, and have not been confined to the Inspectors of the Local Government Board. The duty of determining the areas where it may be necessary to supplement the machinery of the ordinary Poor Law by the opening of relief works, devolves upon the Local Government Board; and in view of the additional responsibilities devolving upon the Board at the present juncture, three temporary Inspectors have been appointed to assist its ordinary staff. The decision to open relief works was arrived at by the Government towards the end of last year, and works, as I have already stated, will shortly be laid out in the Unions of Ballina, Killala, and Belmullet. Works are already in progress in the Ballinrobe and Westport Unions in the same country.

COUNTY AND BOROUGH MAGISTRATES.

*MR. SNAPE (Lancashire, S.E., Heywood): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether he is aware that the sum of £6. 6s. is charged to County Justices qualifying in the County Palatine of Lancaster, whilst a charge of £2 only is made to Justices qualifying in the County of Suffolk; (2) whether most of this excess in Lanashire is owing to a charge of £3. 8s. 6d. being made for the writ of *dedimus potestatem*, of which one moiety goes to the Duchy of Lancaster and the other to the Cursitor; (3) whether he can inform the House who is the Cursitor, by whom appointed, and on what grounds he receives half the charge for the writ of *dedimus*; and (4) whether he will use his influence to prevent this charge of £3. 8s. 6d. being made by the Duchy and the Cursitor, so that the qualifying charge in Lancashire may be reduced to that made in Suffolk?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARMENT (Mr. H. H. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): I am informed by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster that, in his opinion, there is no sufficient reason why the practice of taking out the writ of *dedimus potestatem* by County Magistrates upon their appointment should continue in Lancashire. The discontinuance of the practice will, no doubt, have the effect of reducing the expense to the persons appointed to be Justices. The question what is the proper fee to be fixed as payable upon appointment is now under the consideration of my noble Friend.

MR. SNAPE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether the Mayor of a Borough is charged any fee for qualifying to sit upon a Borough Bench; (2) whether he is aware that it has been decided by the Standing Joint Committee of Lancashire that a charge of One Guinea, to go to the County Funds, shall be made to Mayors and Chairmen of District Councils qualifying to sit, by virtue of their office and during its tenure, upon the County Bench; (3) whether such charge is legal; and (4) whether he will take such steps as shall lead to the abolition of the charge?

MR. ASQUITH: I have no official information on the subject of the first paragraph, but I believe that it is not the custom for the Mayor of a Borough to pay a fee for qualifying to act. The fee of £1. 1s. is charged in Lancashire to every Justice who qualifies at Quarter Sessions as a Justice for the County. The table by which the fee was fixed was approved in 1862, and is apparently considered by the Local Authorities to apply to the *ex-officio* Justices, including the Mayor and District Chairman referred to in the question. In July 1894 I issued a circular recommending that the fee to be charged to Chairmen of District Councils for qualifying shall not exceed 5s. In January last I expressed doubts as to the propriety of the charge of £1. 1s. in the case of Lancashire, and I shall disallow in any future table submitted to the Home Office any fee larger than 5s. for qualifying as an *ex-officio* Justice.

I have, moreover, taken steps to obviate the necessity for *ex-officio* Justices for the County taking their oaths before the Court of Quarter Sessions at all, Her Majesty having been pleased to direct, under the Promissory Oaths Act, that these oaths may be taken, in future, before any two Justices Sitting in Petty Sessions.

THE VOLUNTEER LONG-SERVICE MEDAL.

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether any decision has yet been come to, to grant the long-service medal to Volunteers who, though they may have broken their service for more than a year have yet served for over 20 years as Volunteers?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: By an Army Order issued last month it is provided that a break in service occurring before May 25th, 1894, shall not necessarily prevent the grant of the medal. If the break did not amount to a year, the general officer commanding the district will decide on the validity of the claim. In case of a longer break he will submit the application to headquarters for decision.

"BOND TEA."

MR. FRYE (Kensington, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that a system of trading known as "Bond Tea" is being largely carried on in the Metropolis, a similar system having been described by the Hanley Stipendiary Magistrate as a systemof obtaining money under false pretences, and a swindle from beginning to end; whether he is aware that the Chief Commissioner of Police in the Metropolis has been repeatedly appealed to, to proceed against such traders in London; whether he is aware that the Metropolitan Grocers and Provision Dealers' Association secured a conviction against one of the "Bond Tea" traders at the North London Police Court in December last, and that in spite of this the trade is being continued in the Metropolis without action being taken by the police; also that in Newcastle, Sheerness, Leicester, Hanley, and Preston, the police authorities have taken action against such trading; and, whether he will instruct that steps be immediately taken in the Metropolis to stop this system of trading?

MR. ASQUITH: I am aware that attempts have been made by different firms to promote the sale of their tea by a system which has been held to constitute an illegal lottery. I am not aware of any cases within the Metropolitan Police District in which the police have failed to take action when they could have done so; but I will make further inquiry with a view of insuring the enforcement of the law.

SENTRY DUTY IN SEVERE WEATHER.

MR. A. F. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, during the present severe weather, the guards mounted by the troops before public buildings in London can be reduced, especially before those buildings which are unoccupied?

MR. HANBURY (Preston): I beg to ask whether the right hon. Gentleman has considered the recommendation made by the Duke of Connaught before Lord Wantage's Committee, and whether the sentries at Windsor have also been reduced?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I do not know about Windsor. Perhaps the hon. Member will put that question on the Paper. The question of sentries in London was very carefully considered in 1892 by my predecessor, and the number was brought down to a *minimum*, below which it would not be right to go. Reliefs, however, are more frequent in severe weather.

ARMENIAN OUTRAGES.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I beg to ask the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs whether his statement that the Consular Reports regarding the alleged outrages in the Sasun district were of a graver character than previous Consular Reports referred only to a Report recently made by the Vice-Consul at Van; whether he is aware that Van is three days' journey from the scene of the alleged outrages; whether the Vice-Consul's Report was derived entirely from Armenian sources; and, whether the Vice-Consul has been but a very short time in the country.

*SIR E. GREY: The statements that Reports received recently with regard to the Sasun district were graver than other Consular Reports relating to occurrences in other districts and in previous years, did not refer only to one Report or to one source of information; but as a Commission has been appointed since these Reports were received to inquire into the circumstances to which they relate, I cannot, whilst proceedings before the Commission are pending, give any further information with regard to them. The Vice-Consul at Van arrived there on July 30th.

PRISON-MADE MATS.

MR. QUILTER (Suffolk, Sudbury): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether the Report of the Committee appointed by the Home Secretary to inquire into the administration of Prisons in England has been issued; whether he intends making any change in the manufacture of mats in the Scotch Prisons; whether he will state the value of the total annual sales of mats made in such prisons; and whether he is aware that mats manufactured in Perth Prison are being sold to the public at a price with which it is quite impossible for any English Free Labour to compete?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. O. TREVELYAN): The total value of mats sold in Scottish Prisons in the year ending December 31st, 1894, was £2,237. The mats made in Perth General Prison are sold at the same price as the mats made in other prisons in Scotland. The prices were approximated in January, 1894, to the prices at which similar mats were offered by English outside manufacturers. The Committee appointed by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary on the administration of Prisons in England is still sitting; and I am not prepared at present to make any change in the manufacture of mats in Scottish prisons.

PLEURO-PNEUMONIA.

MR. JOHN ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether his Department is in possession of any information as to the occurrence of some cases of pleuro-pneumonia amongst cattle landed at Antwerp from Canada; and, in that case, what are the particulars; and, what action has been taken by the Belgian Government in consequence?

MR. H. C. GARDNER: Yes, Sir; it appears that Contagious Pleuro-pneumonia was discovered by the Belgian Authorities amongst cattle landed at Antwerp from Canada from the ships *Hispania* and *Cecilia.* Three animals in all were found to be diseased, and one of them is stated to have been an old encysted case. A large number of the most experienced Veterinarians in Belgium, including the teachers at the Government Veterinary Schools, were consulted in the matter, and they appear to have been unanimous as to the nature of the disease. In consequence of these discoveries, the importation of cattle from Canada into Belgium has been prohibited.

IRISH SEED POTATOES.

*MR. D. CRILLY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether any report has reached his Department that certain speculators, taking advantage of the intention of the Government to supply seed potatoes to the starving poor in the western districts of Ireland, are purchasing potatoes in the Coleraine and Ballymoney markets at 3s. 6d. per hundredweight, and shipping them to Scotland, whence they are tendering the same potatoes as "Scotch Champions" to the Poor Law Unions of the West of Ireland at £5 and upwards per ton; and, if no such report has reached his Department, will strict inquiries be made to discover if this alleged traffic has any existence?

MR. J. MORLEY: I have not received any report to the effect stated in the question, but I have directed inquiry to be made into the matter. I may observe, however, that the rules issued for the guidance of the Seed Inspectors appointed by Government to advise and assist Boards of Guardians in their operations under the seed potatoes supply, expressly point out that no tenders for "Scotch Champions" should be accepted by Guardians unless, on inquiry, it is ascertained that the seed was actually grown in Scotland, and in a district calculated by soil and climate to produce seed suitable to the requirements of the occupiers of the Irish land. With a view to preventing contractors from supplying seed grown in unsuitable localities, and for securing *bona-fide* shipments of potatoes from the districts in which they were grown, the Constabulary were some time ago directed to notify to Government the earliest intimation of the movements of vessels laden with potatoes arriving at or leaving Irish ports.

BURSARY COMPETITIONS IN SCOTLAND.

MR. J. W. CROMBIE (Kincardineshire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he can inform me if it is the intention of the University Commissioners to proceed with Ordinance No. 57 [Gen. No. 19], dealing with the marks of subjects at the Bursary Competition, in face of the local disapproval which has been expressed; and, if so, when the Ordinance will again be presented to Parliament?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): The Ordinance referred to by the hon. Member is now before Parliament, and out of the hands of the Universities Commission. I am informed by the Commissioners that they have had practically no indication that the Ordinance, as finally adjusted, did not meet the views of the Aberdeen Authorities as well as those of the other Universities. The Commissioners have laid before me their reasons for the allocation of marks to the respective subjects, which appear to me to have been carefully thought out.

THE UNEMPLOYED IN BRADFORD.

MR. W. S. CAINE (Bradford, E.): I beg to ask the Financial Secretary to the War Department if, in view of the exceptional number of unemployed persons in Bradford, he can hasten forward the commencement of the work upon the Bradford Barracks?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. WOODALL, Hanley): The work to be done at Bradford is mostly out-of-doors work, which could not be carried on in this severe weather, even if funds were available; but the services are for the ensuing financial year, and money is not available during the present year. I may add that the whole service is not of sufficient importance to afford appreciable help to the unhappily large number of unemployed.

RAW COTTON.

SIR W. H. HOULDSWORTH (Manchester, N.W.): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he can state to the House the quantities of raw cotton imported into this country, and the quantities of cotton yarns exported in each of the five years 1890 to 1894, inclusive, and the percentage of increase or decrease during that period.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): I presume that the hon. Member put this question down on account of the statement I made and the figures I used the other night, which were to show that in the year 1894 there had been no marked or special falling off in the volume of the cotton trade. I will not give all the figures in detail, but the figures which the hon. Member asks for will be found, as regards the importation of the raw material of cotton, in the Board of Trade Returns for December 1894, p. 34, and the last number of the Statistical Abstract, p. 85. There is a little difficulty in all these Returns, arising from the fact that in some instances the figures are given in hundredweights and in others in pounds. The figures for 1894, in pounds, were 1,788,116,512 — *i.e.*, 372,000,000 more than in the preceding year, 1893. It is objected that the year 1893 was affected by the cotton strike, but the figures for 1894 were 13,000,000 higher than those for 1892. They are 206,000,000 lower than those for 1891, the year of great prosperity; but only 5,000,000 lower than those for 1890; while they are 80,000,000 higher than the average of the last 15 years. It is upon that ground that I stated there was no exceptional fall in the year 1894. Then as to cotton yarn, figures for this will be found in the Board of Trade Returns for December 1894 p, 58: and the last Statistical Abstract, p. 91. The figures for 1894 were 236,000,000 lbs., or 30,000,000 more than in the year 1893, and 3,000,000 more than in the year 1892. They are 9,000,000 less than in 1891 and 22,000,000 less than in 1890. They are, more, however, than they were 15 years ago. This does not show any special fall in the year 1894, which is better than the two preceding years, but not so good as the years of great prosperity, 1890 and 1891. I observe that the hon. Member makes no inquiry as to the export of piece goods, for obvious reasons. It will be seen by the Board of Trade Returns for December, 1894, p. 68 and the Statistical Abstract, p. 91, that the export of piece goods was 5,312,753,900 yards, by far the highest figure yet recorded—660,000,000 more than in 1893; 439,000,000 more than in 1892; and 188,000,000 more than in 1890, the highest figure previously reached. Therefore, it is clear that on this head the volume of trade has not diminished, but increased. I referred to the evidence that employment in textile factories had not diminished (Statistical Abstract, p. 182) It is true that those are returns which are only given at five years' interval, and only come down to the year 1890. Therefore, these figures do not apply to the last five years; but, taking the Returns from 1870 to 1890, it will be found that the spindles and the persons employed have increased in number. In 1870 the power looms were 440,000; in 1890 they were 615,000; the persons employed in 1870 were 450,000, and in 1890, 528,000; or 78,000 more. I am sorry I am not able to give the figures for the last five years, which, of course, are of importance, but I think I have given, as far as I can, the facts on which I based my statement that there was no exceptional depression an the year 1894.

Sir W. H. HOULDSWORTH (Manchester, N.W.) said the reason why he had not referred to piece goods was that the right hon. Gentleman had not referred to them in his statement.

Mr. G. WHITELEY (Stockport) asked if the figures were not, in some respects, misleading, and whether the large increase in piece goods towards the end of 1894 was not entirely due to the expectation that the cotton duties would be re-imposed, but that they would not be reimposed till March.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I do not think the figures are at all misleading for the purpose for which I gave them. I did not use them at all with reference to profits, but with regard to the amount of employment. What you have got to look at is the quantity of material worked; and I admit, of course, that in the thriving times of 1890 and 1891 things were better, and that in the years of 1892 and 1893 they were worse. In 1894, they were better than in 1893.

THE DISTRESS IN WEST MAYO.

*Dr. ROBERT AMBROSE (Louth, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, what steps have been taken to relieve the distress existing in West Mayo?

Mr. J. MORLEY: Relief works have been opened in the three Electoral Divisions which comprise Achill Island, and on the mainland adjoining. Works are also in progress in the Ballinrobe Union, and it is proposed to lay out other works in the Ballina and Killala Unions towards the end of this month, and, at a later date, in the Union of Belmullet.

CONTROL OF PLACES OF ENTERTAINMENT.

*Mr. DISRAELI (Cheshire, Altrincham): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is prepared to bring in a Bill to withdraw the Control of Places of Entertainment from the County Council and its Officials, and to give such control to some responsible but non-elective Authority.

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: I see no reason whatever for introducing or supporting such a Measure.

THE SWAZILAND CONVENTION.

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Convention regarding Swaziland, concluded with President Kruger in December last, continues the present tripartite Administration of Swaziland until May; whether, in the event of the Swazis still refusing to place themselves under Boer rule, the Boers will be permitted to use force to conquer Swaziland; and whether Her Majesty's Government intend to prevent the use of force against the Swazis before May next?

Mr. S. BUXTON: The Convention of 1890, under which the tripartite administration of Swaziland was created, will be superseded if and when the Volksraad ratify the Convention of 1894; or, if previously to such ratification the Swazis agree to sign the Organic Proclamation, the Convention of 1893 will thereupon come into force. If neither of these events occur, the Convention of 1890 will continue in force, subject to termination by a month's notice on either side. The second part of the hon. Member's question is hypothetical, and I cannot, therefore, answer it. As regards the third part, as long as the Convention of 1890 is in operation the employment of force either by Her Majesty's Government or by that of the South African Republic is regulated by that Convention.

ELECTION EXPENSES AND THE PAYMENT OF MEMBERS.

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if it was intended to bring in a special Bill in regard to the payment of election expenses, or would this form part of another measure?

SIR W. HARCOURT: It is to be part of another measure.

MR. BARTLEY: Part of the Finance Bill?

SIR W. HARCOURT: No.

MR. S. WOODS (Lancashire, Ince) asked the right hon. Gentleman to explain to the House, if it was not the intention of the Government to bring in a Bill for the payment of Members, how they intended to carry out their promise of last year when they said that they would provide for the payment of Members and of election expenses in a Bill or in the Budget?

SIR W. HARCOURT said, the measures would be provided for by a Bill.

*MR. BURNIE asked the right hon. Gentleman what explanation he could give to the House of the present action of the Governmnt when, in March, 1893, it accepted a Resolution pledging itself to deal with the question as early as practicable?

SIR W. HARCOURT: The word "practicable" has a very large interpretation. The Prime Minister received a deputation upon this subject, and he stated that the matter depended upon two things—time and money. I have always stated that we are in favour of the principle of payment of Members, but it must be left to the Government to say when is the time or where is the money.

MR. J. H. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy District) asked if it were not the case that a definite pledge was given at the end of last Session that a Bill would be laid upon the Table this Session by the Government?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I do not know what my hon. Friend calls a definite pledge; I said I hoped so.

MR. DALZIEL: May I ask whether that hope has been abandoned?

SIR W. HARCOURT: No, Sir.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I beg to move that Government business have precedence this day and to-morrow.

Motion agreed to.

MOTIONS.

CORPORATE ASSOCIATIONS PROPERTY BILL.

On Motion of Mr. G. Howell, Bill for the Better Securing their Property to Corporate Associations, and for Preventing the Alienation of their Funds.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday 20th February, and to be printed. [Bill 93.]

SPORT REGULATION BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Alpheus C. Morton, Bill to prohibit the Hunting, Coursing, and Shooting of Animals kept in Confinement.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 94.]

COMMISSIONERS OF SEWERS OF THE CITY OF LONDON (BATHS AND WASH-HOUSES) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. A. C. Morton, Bill to enable the Commissioners of Sewers of the City of London to provide Baths and Wash-houses within the said City.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time on Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 95.]

JOINT STOCK COMPANIES REGISTER BILL.

On Motion of Mr. W. O. Clough, Bill to enable the Registrar of Joint Stock Commpanies to remove Names of Companies from the Register in Certain Cases.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday 20th February, and to be printed. [Bill 96.]

CROFTERS' HOLDINGS (SCOTLAND) ACT (1886) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Sir D. H. Macfarlane, Bill to amend the Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Act, 1886.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday 22nd May, and to be printed. [Bill 97.]

JURORS' PAYMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. J. Lloyd-Morgan, Bill for the Payment of Jurors.

Bill presented and read first time; to be read a second time upon Friday 1st March, and to be printed. [Bill 98.]

CASES STATED (APPEAL) (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. J. Ross, Bill to permit Appeals in Cases stated for Divisional Courts in Ireland to the Court of Appeal.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Friday, and to be printed. [Bill 99.]

TRUSTEE ACT (1893) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Sir A. K. Rollit, Bill to amend The Trustee Act, 1893, in Regard to the Investment of Trust and other Funds.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Friday 22nd February, and to be printed. [Bill 100.]

BOROUGH FUNDS ACT (1872) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Sir A. K. Rollit, Bill to amend the Borough Funds Act, 1872.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Friday, 22nd February, and to be printed. [Bill 101.]

POOR LAW AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. George Lambert, Bill to exempt Certain Persons from the Liability of maintaining Relations who become Chargeable to the Public Funds.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 27th February, and to be printed. [Bill 102.]

GAME BILL.

On Motion of Mr. George Lambert, Bill to amend the Law relating to Game, and extend the Provisions of the Ground Game Act, 1880.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 13th March, and to be printed. [Bill 103.]

ORDER OF THE DAY.

ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY'S SPEECH.

Order read for resuming the Debate on the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

*Mr. NAOROJI (Finsbury, Central) moved an Amendment to add the following to the Address—

> "And we humbly pray that Your Majesty will be graciously pleased to direct Your Majesty's Ministers, to so adjust the financial relations between the United Kingdom and British India, with regard to all the expenditure incurred in the employment of Europeans in the British-Indian Services, Civil and Military, in this Country and in India, that some fair and adequate portion of such expenditure should be borne by the British Exchequer in proportion to the pecuniary and political benefits accruing to the United Kingdom from Your Gracious Majesty's sway over India; and that the British Treasury should sustain a fair and equitable portion of all expenditure incurred on all military and political operations beyond the boundaries of India in which both Indian and British interests are jointly concerned."

Having expressed his regret that generally it was not the practice to mention India and to indicate any concern for its interests in the Queen's Speech, he said he was ready to acknowledge with gratitude the advantage which had ensued to the people of India from British Rule. He had no desire to minimise those benefits; at the same time, he did not appeal to that House or to the British nation, for any form of charity to India, however poverty-stricken she is. He based the claims of India on grounds of justice alone. The question was not at all one of a Party character, and therefore he addressed what he had to say to the English people as a whole. He was often supposed to complain about the European officials personally. It was not so. It was the system which made the officials what they were, that he complained about. They were the creatures of circumstances. They could only move in the one-sided groove in which they were placed by the evil system. Further, his remarks applied to British India and not to the Native States. It had been sometimes said that he resorted to agitation in bringing forward the claims of India, but on that point he would only quote a few words from Macaulay, who said in one of his speeches—

> "I hold that we have owed to agitation a long series of beneficent reforms which could have been effected in no other way. . . . The truth is that agitation is inseparable from popular Government. . . . Would the slave trade ever have been abolished without an agitation? Would slavery ever have been abolished without agitation?"

He would add that their slavery would not be abolished without agitation and it was well that it should be abolished, by peaceful agitation, rather than by revolution caused by despair. He next proposed to consider the respective benefits to Britain and India from their connection. From the annual production of India the Government took about 700,000,000 rupees for the expenditure of the State.

The first result of this cost was law and order, the greatest blessing that any rule could confer, and Indians fully appreciated this benefit of safety from violence to life, limb, and property. Admitting this benefit to India, was it not equally or even more vital benefit to the British in India, and more particularly to the British Rule itself? Did not the very existence of every European resident in India depend upon this law and order, and so also of the British power itself? The Hindus (and the Mahomedans also, the bulk of whom are Hindus by race) were, by their nature, in their very blood, by the inheritance of social and religious institutions of some thousands of years, peaceful and law-abiding. Their division into the four great divisions, was the foundation of their peaceful nature. One class was devoted to learning. Peace was an absolute necessity to them. The fighting and ruling and protecting business was left to the small second-class. The third and the largest class—the industrial, the agricultural, the trading, and others—depended upon peace and order for their work, and the fourth serving class were submissive and law-abiding. The virtue of law-abiding was a peculiarly and religiously binding duty upon the Hindus, and to it does Britain owe much of its present peaceful rule over India. It will be Britain's own fault if this character is changed. It was sometimes said that England conquered India with the sword, and would hold it by the sword; but he did not believe this was the sentiment of the British people generally. He could not better emphasise this than in the words of their present great Indian General. Lord Roberts had said that—

> "However efficient and well equipped the Army of India might be—were it indeed absolute perfection, and were its numbers considerably more than at present—our greatest strength must ever rest on the firm base of a united and contented people."

That was the spirit in which he spoke. At present India shared far less benefits than justice demanded. Hundreds of millions of rupees were drawn from, and taken out of, the country for the payment of European officials of all kinds, without any material equivalent being received for it; capital was thus withdrawn, and the natives prevented from accumulating it; and under the existing system a large part of the resources and industries of the country was thrown into the hands of British and other capitalists. The 300,000,000 or so of rupees which the India Office draws every year at present is so much British benefit in a variety of ways. British India was indeed British India, and not India's India. He next examined the material or pecuniary benefit derived by Britain and India. Out of about 700,000,000 rupees raised annually from the annual production of the country, nearly 200,000,000 rupees were appropriated in pay, pensions and allowances to Europeans in this country and in India. This compulsorily obtained benefit to Britain crippled the resources of British Indians, who could never make any capital and must drag on a poverty-stricken life. Hundreds and thousands of millions of wealth passed in principal and interest thereon from India to Britain. Thousands of Europeans found a career and livelihood in India, to the exclusion of the children of the soil, who thus lost both their bread and their brains thereby. Not only that. This crippled condition naturally threw nearly all the requirements of India more or less into British hands, which, under the patronage and protection of the British officials, monopolised nearly everything. British India was, next to officials, more or less for British professionals, traders, capitalists, planters, shipowners, railway holders, and so on, the bulk of the Indians having only to serve, for poor income or wages that they earned. In a way a great mass of the Indians were worse off than the slaves of the Southern States. The slaves being property were taken care of by their masters. Indians may die off by millions by want and it is nobody's concern. The slaves worked on their master's land and resources, and the masters took the profits. Indians have to work on their own land and resources, and hand the profits to the foreign masters. He offered a simple test. Supposing that by some vicissitudes of fortune, which he hoped and prayed would never occur, Britain was conquered by a foreign people. This was no impossible assumption in this world. When Cæsar landed in this country no one could have dreamt that the savages he met here would in time be the masters of the greatest empire in the world, and that the same Rome and Italy, then the masters of the world, would in turn become a geographical name only. Well, suppose this House was cleared of Englishmen and filled with foreigners, or perhaps shut up altogether, all power and plans in their hands, eating and carrying away much of the wealth of this country year after year, in short Britain reduced to the present condition and system of government of India, would the Britons submit to it a single day if they could help it? So law-abiding as they are, will not all their law-abiding vanish? No! The Briton will not submit, as he says "Britons will never be slaves," and may they sing so for ever. Now, he asked whether, though they would never be slaves, was it their mission to make others slaves? No; the British people's instincts are averse to that. Their mission is and ought to be to raise others to their own level. And it was that faith in the instinctive love of justice in the British heart and conscience, that keeps the Indian so loyal and hopeful. There was no doubt an immense material benefit to England accruing from the Administration of India, but there was no corresponding benefit to the Indian people under the present evil system. For the sake of argument merely, he would assume that the material benefit was equal to the inhabitants of India as well as to the British people, and even on that assumption he contended that the British people were bound for the benefit they derived to take their share of the cost of producing that benefit. The position had been correctly described by Lord Salisbury, who said:—

> "The injury is exaggerated in the case of India, where so much of the Revenue is exported without a direct equivalent. As India must be bled, the lancet should be directed to the parts where the blood is congested, or at least sufficient, not to those already feeble for the want of it."

That was correct as far as the present British System in India was concerned, and "India must be bled." The result of this was that their Finance Ministers were obliged to lament and complain, year after year, of the extreme poverty of India, which did not enable them to bring its finances into a properly sound condition. The subject of the poverty of India embraced many aspects in its cause and effects. But this was not the occasion on which such a vast subject could be dealt with adequately. It was the natural and inevitable result of the evil of foreign dominion as it exists in the present system, as predicted by Sir John Shore, above a hundred years ago. In order to give an idea of the position of India as compared with that of England he would point only to one aspect. The Secretary of State for India in his speech last year, on going into Committee on the Indian Budget, made a very important statement. He said—

> "Now as to the Revenue, I think the figures are very instructive. Whereas in England the taxation is £2 11s. 8d. per head; in Scotland, £2 8s. 1d. per head; and in Ireland, £1 12s. 5d. per head; the Budget which I shall present to-morrow will show that the taxation per head in India is something like 2s. 6d., or one-twentieth the taxation of the United Kingdom, and one-thirteenth that of Ireland."

The Member for Flintshire (Mr. S. Smith) then asked, "Does he exclude the Land Revenue?" And the right hon. Gentleman replied—

> "Yes. So far as the taxation of India is concerned, taking the rupee at 1s. 1d., it is 2s. 6d. per head. The exclusion of Land Revenue was unfair, but this was not the time to discuss that point fully. The Land Revenue did not rain from heaven. It formed part and parcel of the annual wealth from which the State Revenue is taken in a variety of different names—call it tax, rent, excise, duty, stamps, income-tax, and so on. It simply meant that so much was taken from the annual production for the purposes of Government. The figures taken by the right hon. Gentleman for the English taxation is also the gross Revenue, and similarly must this Indian Revenue be taken, except Railway and Navigation Revenue."

That statement of the right hon. Gentleman, if it meant anything, meant that the incidence of taxation in India was exceedingly light compared with the incidence of taxation in England. It was the usual official fiction that the incidence of taxation in India was small as compared with that of this country. But when they considered the incidence of taxation, they must consider not simply the amount paid in such taxation, but what it was compared with the capacity of the person who paid it. An elephant might with ease carry a great weight, whilst a quarter ounce, or a grain of wheat, might be sufficient to crush an ant. Taking the capacity of the two countries, the annual product or income of England was admitted to be something like £35 per head. If there was a taxation of £2 10s., as compared with that it was easy to see that the incidence or heaviness was only about 7 per cent. of the annual wealth. If, on the other hand, they took the production of India at the high official estimate of 27 rupees per head—though he maintained it was only 20 rupees—even then the percentage, or incidence of taxation, was about 10 or 11 per cent., or at 20 rupees the incidence was nearly 14 per cent., *i.e.*, nearly double what it was in England. To say, therefore, that India was lightly taxed was altogether a fiction. The fact was, as he stated, that the pressure of taxation in India, according to its means of paying, was nearly double that of wealthy England, and far more oppressive, as exacted from poverty. That was not all. The case for India was worse, and that was the fundamental evil of the present system. In the United Kingdom, if about £100,000,000 are raised as revenue, every farthing returns to the people themselves. But in British India, out of about Rs. 700,000,000 about Rs. 200,000,000 are paid to foreigners—besides all the other British benefits obtained from the wretched produce of Rs. 20 per head. Even an ocean, if it lost some water every day which never returned to it, would be dried up in time. Under similar conditions wealthy England even would be soon reduced to poverty. He hoped it would be felt by hon. Members that India, in that condition, could derive very little benefit from British Administration. He spoke in agony, not in indignation, both for the sake of the land of his career, and for the land of his birth, and he said that if a system of righteousness were introduced into India instead of the present evil system, both England and India would be blessed, the profit and benefit to England itself would be ten times greater than it now was, and the Indian people would then regard their Government by this country as a blessing, instead of being inclined to contemn it. England, with India contented, justly treated, and prosperous, may defy half-a-dozen Russias, and may drive back Russia to the very gates of St. Petersburgh. The Indian will then fight as a patriot for his own hearth and home. Punjab alone will be able to provide a powerful army. Assuming again, for the purpose of argument, that their benefit in India was equal to the British benefit, then he said that the British must share the cost of the expenditure which produced these results, and for which both partners profited equally. But in his Amendment he did not ask that even half of the whole cost should be borne by the British people, but only for that part of the expenditure which was incurred on Europeans, and that entirely for the sake of British rule. If it was not for the necessity of maintaining British rule there would be no need to drain India in the manner in which it was now drained by the crushing European Services. Lord Roberts, speaking in London in May, 1893, said :—

> "I rejoice to learn that you recognize how indissolubly the prosperity of the United Kingdom is bound up with the retention of that vast Eastern Empire."

But if the interests of England and India were indissolubly bound up, it was only just and proper that both should pay for the cost of the benefits they derived in equal and proper proportions. Lord Kimberley, in a speech at the Mansion House, in 1893, said :—

> "We are resolutely determined to maintain our supremacy over our Indian Empire . . . that" (among other things) "supremacy rests upon the maintenance of our European Civil Service. . . . We rest also upon our magnificent European Force which we maintain in that country."

The European Civil Services and European residents, he contended, were the weakest part in the maintenance of their rule in India. Whenever any unfortunate troubles did arise, as in 1857, the European Civil Service, and Europeans generally, were their greatest difficulty. They must be saved, they were in the midst of the greatest danger, and in such circumstances they became their greatest weakness. The loyal Indians saved many lives. To suppose that their Civil Service, or the British people, could have any other safety than that which arose from the satisfaction of India, was to deceive themselves. Whatever might be the strength of their Military Force, their true security in the maintenance of their rule in India depended entirely on the satisfaction of the people. Brute force may make an empire, but brute force would not maintain it; it was moral force and justice and righteousness alone that would maintain it. If he asked that the whole expenditure incurred on Europeans should be defrayed from the British Treasury he should not be far wrong, but, for the sake of argument, he was prepared to admit that the benefit derived from the employment of Europeans was shared equally by Europeans and Natives. He, therefore, asked that at least half of the expenditure incurred on Europeans here and in India should be paid from the British Exchequer. Indians were sometimes threatened that if they raised the question of financial relations, something would have to be said about the Navy. Apart from a fair share for the vessels stationed in India, why should England ask India to defray any other portion of the cost of the Navy? The very sense of justice had probably prevented any such demand being made. The fame, gain and glory of the Navy was all England's own. There was not a single Indian employed in the Navy. It was said the Navy was necessary to protect the Indian commerce. There was not a single ship sailing from or to India which belonged to India. The whole of the shipping was British, and not only that, but the whole cargo while floating was entirely at the risk of British money. There was not an ounce exported from India on which British money did not lie through Indian banks. In the same way, when goods were exported from England, British money was upon them. The whole floating shipping and goods was first British risk. Lastly, there is every inch of the British Navy required for the protection of these blessed islands. Every Budget, from either Party, emphasises this fact, that the first line of defence for the protection of the United Kingdom alone, demands a Navy equal to that of any two European Powers. He had asked for several returns from the Secretary of State. If the right hon. Gentleman would give those returns, the House would be able to judge of the real material condition of India; until those returns were presented, they would not be in a position to understand exactly the real condition of India under the present system. He would pass over all the small injustices, in charging every possible thing to India, which they would not dare to do with the Colonies. India Office buildings, Engineering College building, charge for recruiting, while the soldiers form part and parcel of the Army here; the system of short service occasioning transport expenses, and so on, and so on. While attending the meeting upon the Armenian atrocities, he could not help admiring the noble efforts that the English always made for the protection of the suffering and oppressed. It is one of the noblest traits in the English character. Might he appeal to the same British people, who were easily moved to generosity and compassion when there was open violence, to consider the cause why in India hundreds of thousands of people were frequently carried away through famine and drought, and that millions constantly lived on starvation fare? Why was it that after a hundred years of administration by the most highly paid officials, the people of India were not able to pay one-twentieth part of the taxation which the United Kingdom paid, or even one-thirteenth which poor Ireland paid? Were the English satisfied with such a result? Is it creditable to them? While England's wealth had increased, India's had decreased. The value of the whole production of India was not £2 per head per annum, or, taking into account the present rate of exchange, it was only 20s. The people here spent about £4 per head in drink alone, while India's whole production is only a pound or two per head. Such should not be the result of a system which was expected to be beneficent. He appealed to the people of this country to ask and consider this question. If there were famine here food would be poured in from the whole world. Why not so in India? Why the wretched result that the bulk of the people had no means to pay for food. Britain has saved India from personal violence. Would it not also save millions from want and ravages of famine, owing to their extreme poverty caused by the evil which Sir J. Shore predicted. The late Mr. Bright told his Manchester friends that there were two ways of benefiting themselves, the one was by plunder, and the other was by trade, and he preferred the latter mode. At present, England's trade with India was a miserable thing. The British produce sent to all India was about worth 2s. per head per annum. If, however, India were prosperous, and able to buy, England would have no need to complain of duties and the want of markets. In India there was a market of 300 millions of civilized people. If the wants of those people were provided for, with complete free trade in her own hands and control, England would be able to eliminate altogether the word "unemployed" from her dictionary, in fact, she would not be able to supply all that India would want. The other day the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that where injustice and wrong prevailed, as it did prevail in Armenia, a Liberal Government was called upon to obtain the co-operation of European powers in order to repress the wrong. Might he appeal to the right hon. Gentleman to give an earnest and generous consideration to India? The right hon. Gentleman, the Member for Midlothian, made a very grand speech on his birthday upon the Armenian question. He appealed to that right hon. Gentleman, and to all those of the same mind, to consider and find out the fundamental causes which make the destitution of forty or fifty millions, a figure of official admission, and destruction of hundreds of thousands by famine, possible, though British India's resources are admitted on all sides to be vast. In the present Amendment his object was to have that justice of a fair share in expenditure to be taken by Britain in proportion to her benefits. He asked for no subsidy, but only for common justice. By a certain amount of expenditure they derived certain benefits; they were partners, therefore, let them share equally the benefits and the costs. His Amendment also had reference to expenditure outside the boundaries of India. He maintained that if England undertook operations in Burmah, Afghanistan, and in other places beyond the borders of India for the protection of British rule, she was bound by justice to defray at least half the cost. The benefit of these operations was for both Britain and India. The principle was admitted in the case of the last Afghan war, which was certainly not a very necessary war, but the Liberal Government defrayed a portion of the expenditure. That India should be required to pay the cost of all the small wars and aggressions beyond her boundaries, or political subsidies, was not worthy of the British people, when these were all as much, or more, necessary for their own benefit and rule as for the benefit of India. He hoped he was not appealing to deaf ears. He knew that when any appeal was made on the basis of justice, righteousness, and honour, the English people responded to it, and with the perfect faith in the English character he believed that his appeal would not be in vain. The short of the whole matter was, whether the people of British India were British citizens or British helots. If the former, as he firmly believed to be the desire of the British people, then let them have their birthright of British rights as well as British responsibilities. Let them be treated with justice, that the cost of the benefits to both should be shared by both. The unseemly squabble that was now taking place on the question of Import Duties between the Lancashire manufacturers on the one hand and the British Indian Government on the other illustrated the helpless condition of the people of India. This was the real position. The Indian Government arbitrarily imposed a burden of a million or so a year on the ill-fed Indians as a heartless compensation to the well-fed officials, and have gone on adding to expenditure upon Europeans. They want money, and they adopt Lord Salisbury's advice to bleed where there is blood left, and also by means of Import Duties tax the subjects of the Native States. The Lancashire gentlemen object and want to apply the lancet to other parts that would not interfere with their interests—and thus the quarrel between them. However that is decided, the Indians are to be bled. He did not complain of the selfishness of the Lancashire people. By all means be selfish, but be intelligently selfish. Remember what Mr. Bright said—

> "Your good can only come through India's good. Help India to be prosperous, and you will help your prosperity."

Macaulay truly said—

> "It would be a doting wisdom, which would keep a hundred millions, now more than two

hundred millions, of men from being our customers in order that they might continue to be our slaves."

They had no voice as to the expenditure of a single farthing in the administration of Indian affairs. The British Indian Government could do what they liked. There was, of course, an Indian Council; but when a Budget was proposed it had to be accepted. The representatives of the Council could make a few speeches, but there the matter ended. The people of India now turned to the people of Great Britain, and relying on the justice of their claim, asked that they should contribute their fair share in proportion to any benefits which the country might derive from the possession of India.

*SIR W. WEDDERBURN (Banffshire) seconded the Amendment. He expressed his great regret that no reference to India had been made in the Queen's Speech, because the people of India were in a condition of extreme anxiety as to the nature of the proposed Financial Inquiry which was promised last Session. They were anxious to know whether that Inquiry was really to go to the root of the matter; whether it would be a genuine effort to learn the true causes, and apply the real remedy, to the disastrous financial condition of India. Many Members of the House also shared in that anxiety with regard to the proposed Inquiry; especially hon. Gentlemen representing Lancashire constituencies were deeply interested in connection with the question of Import Duties on cotton goods. It could not be too distinctly understood that the imposition of Import Duties was a direct consequence of excessive administrative expenditure in India. It was, in fact, one incident in the downward course of Indian Finance. It was one of the stages in the Rake's Progress. They had two other steps in that career in the closing of the mints, which convulsed Exchanges all over the civilized world, and in the misappropriation of the Famine Fund, on which the lives of the people of India depended. Therefore, he asked hon. Members from Lancashire to say that this excessive expenditure should stop, and then Import Duties on cotton or anything else would cease to be necessary. Several other hon. Members who took a deep interest in Indian affairs were also anxious to know the terms of the reference to the proposed Committee of Inquiry. He did not think that those hon. Gentlemen, if asked to sit on the Committee, would be willing to give their time and labour if the Inquiry was to be a mere book-keeping inquiry of no more value than the bogus audits of the Liberator type. They wanted to go to the root of the case, to find out the causes of the financial difficulty, and to ascertain what were the means by which the finances of India could be placed on a solid basis. They were ready to prove certain propositions before that Inquiry: first, that the condition of the people of India was one of extreme poverty; second, that the burden of taxation was more than the people could bear; third, that the proceeds of this taxation were being employed in useless and mischievous frontier wars; fourth, that if this useless military expenditure were stopped it would not only not be necessary to impose Import Duties, but would be possible to remove a certain amount of taxation, and provide funds for objects tending to promote the progress and welfare of the people. It was often said that it was a dreadful thing to have a submerged tenth in this country. But in India there was a submerged fifth. A fifth of the whole population had only one meal a day, and they went through life without ever having their hunger fully satisfied. The Secretary of State for India refused to go into the question of Revenue, and only offered an inquiry into expenditure. It appeared to him that the natural course was to take income first and expenditure afterwards. It seemed a curious thing to lay down how much they ought to spend before they knew how much they had got to spend. His contention was that expenditure in India was on too high a scale for the capabilities of the country. He regretted that the Secretary of State for India was unwilling to go into the question of the reasonable amount of taxation that ought to be raised from India. He thought the Inquiry on that point was all the more necessary, because—and he said it with regret—the right hon. Gentleman seemed to be possessed with a spirit of optimism. The right hon. Gentleman took too rosy a view of the condition of Indian finance, and also of the financial condition of the Government of India. It appeared to him that those optimistic views were a dangerous delusion under existing circumstances. The maximum estimate of the average income of the people of India was 27 rupees per year, or three halfpence per day. Where was the surplus to tax out of three halfpence per day? As a matter of fact, the cultivating class had no savings; they had nothing put away, and having no food in store a single failure in the harvest produced the death of hundreds of thousands, and even millions of those unfortunate people. How was it possible to tax further such a people as that of India, who were now paying in proportion nearly double what the inhabitants of this wealthy country were paying. The Secretary of State for India also took much too favourable a view of the financial condition of the Government of India. There was an interesting and authoritative article in *The Nineteenth Century* on the subject by Sir A. Colvin, in which it was stated that, unless the aggressive military expenditure was stopped, there would only be three courses open to the Indian Government—to get assistance from the British Treasury, to further tax the Indian people, or to declare India bankrupt. One fact which alone was sufficient to prove the dire financial straits of the Indian Government, was the imposition of the Import Duties, which were giving such great dissatisfaction in Lancashire. No Secretary of State for India would be willing to excite the anger of the Lancashire Members unless it was impossible otherwise to meet India's liabilities. India must have been squeezed very dry before Manchester was called to help. But the Lancashire Members ought to consider the unfortunate position of the Indian taxpayers in this matter. They (the Indian taxpayers) did not want Import Duties; but they asked for them as the form of taxation least painful to them. They preferred to pay 5 per cent. on imported goods, mainly affecting the richer classes, rather than an extra duty on salt—a commodity which was now taxed 4,000 per cent., and which was a necessary to the poorest. He appealed to the great, noble policy associated with the men of Manchester, and Mr. John Bright, who was a friend of India first, and of all other interests afterwards. Let the hon. Members for Lancashire obtain their object in another way, and join in asking for a reduction in the expenditure which made Import Duties necessary. He regarded this military expenditure not only as useless, but as absolutely mischievous. It was an abandonment of the policy of Lord Lawrence, which was that India should remain within her natural boundaries and barriers. The basis of a safe defence of India was the contentment of the people themselves, with friendly neighbours and a full Treasury. At present, India had an empty Treasury; enemies on the frontier, and an overtaxed and starved people within. He begged to second the Amendment.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.): There is one part of the speech of the hon. Gentleman who moved this Amendment with which I cordially agree. He said that India asked for no charity, for no subvention, but that her claim was for simple justice. I can assure him that not only this Government but the preceding Government, and the Government which will follow, can have, as all English Statesmen can have, no other wish than to treat India with the strictest, and, I may say, the most generous justice. He said that he moved his Amendment in no Party spirit. I believe and I accept that statement. I can conceive no greater calamity to Indian interests, and to the Indian Empire, than that it should become one of the shuttlecocks with which the Party game of battledore is played. We want to keep Party out of Indian affairs altogether. The people of this country have undertaken—or have had placed upon them—a great trust. I believe, in direct opposition to the statements of the Mover and the Seconder of this Motion, that that trust has been hitherto faithfully, justly, and honourably discharged. I believe that it has conferred unspeakable benefits upon the people of India; and, although no one can be more ready than I am to admit that there are many points in which improvements are desirable, and many spheres in which financial reform can be widely extended, expenditure reduced, and efficiency increased; at the same time, I must express my strong dissent, both from the facts and figures, and from the conclusions which my two hon. Friends have brought forward. The Mover of this Resolution, I am sure, did not himself believe that at the present day the people of India are, under British Rule, suffering grosser outrages, more acute wrongs, than those which it is alleged the people of Armenia suffer under Turkish rule at the present time. I put it to him as a friend of India, as one who, as he tells us, desires to secure perfectly amicable relations between these two great Empires, whether it is wise for him to say in the English House of Commons words which will, no doubt, be transmitted to the whole people of India, and which will record that there is a man in this House who believes that the people of India are at this moment suffering at the hands of the Queen Empress and her advisers wrongs which can be compared even in one-thousandth degree with the wrongs which the Armenians complain of suffering under Turkish rule at the present time. I am sure that that was a mistake of my hon. Friend; and I will also pass by all his allusions to what he called "a conquered people" being treated as slaves and helots. That is not in harmony with the ideas of the people of England, and it is not in harmony with the facts. But the hon. Member gave us two or three figures, and perhaps by the accuracy of those statements I may be justified in judging to some extent of the accuracy of his conclusions. It is in reference to those figures that such largely incorrect views are put before the public mind. I will only refer to two or three of the statements which my hon. Friend made in the course of his speech. In the first place, he said that we were dealing with an expenditure of 70 millions. As I pointed out last year, those very large sums include a variety of incomes and expenditures which have no application to taxation or public expenditure as we use the terms in this country. If you were to include in the financial statement of this country the whole rental of England, the traffic receipts of every railway and canal, an enormous amount of public works, which in itself produces an income sufficient to discharge the entire cost of construction, you would swell the English Budget from 100 millions to 1,000 millions, and then you might say that you had such a sum to deal with. As I said six months ago, and no one can deny the statement, the real net revenue and expenditure of India are about 50 millions. There was another statement which I was sorry to hear my hon. Friend make, as it may be misunderstood, and may produce in many minds an idea of extravagance and injustice. Though the statement has at first sight some justification, it is not based on the facts of the case. My hon. Friend told the House that the people of India were called upon to pay Rx.20,000,000 to English officials. The conclusion that any one would draw from that statement would be that the ordinary civil expenditure of the Government of India includes something like that sum for salaries. Let me tell the House exactly what was the cost at the date of the last complete return, some six years ago. The cost was Rx. 11,726,000, and of that sum over Rx.6,000,000 were paid to natives.

*Mr. D. NAOROJI, interposing, said, there was a return of the salaries paid to officials receiving 1,000 rupees and upwards, which showed that the salaries, pensions, and other payments made to Europeans in this country and India would be nearly 200,000,000 rupees.

*Mr. H. H. FOWLER: I dissent from those figures. I come down to officers receiving 250 rupees, which figure practically covers the Civil Service. The numbers which constitute that large army of public servants, both Europeans and natives, who discharge their duties with the greatest ability and efficiency, are 7,991 Europeans, 5,347 Eurasians, and 119,514 natives. My hon. Friend and the Seconder also made a statement with reference to taxation in India. I do not understand my hon. Friend to represent correctly the answer which I gave to the hon. Member for Flintshire (Mr. Samuel Smith), who asked whether I excluded the land revenue when I stated that the taxation of India was the figure which has been quoted. I did not include the land revenue, which is rent, and not taxation. How much of taxation falls on the people of India? As to this Rx.50,000,000 of tax and non-tax revenue forming the taxation of India, you must divide it by one-half in order to obtain the tax revenue; and when we are told that the people of India are unable to pay taxation, I can only say to the House that the only tax which the Indian peasant need pay—and I am sorry he has to do so—is the tax on salt. I have never defended that tax; and I said last year that I should be exceedingly glad to see it repealed. I am satisfied that if our expenditure admitted of a reduction of taxation, Indian opinion would not demand the repeal of Customs duties, but rather the repeal of the salt tax, which presses on the poorest classes of the Indian people. The salt tax amounts to five annas per head; and I ask the House to remember that figure. Then my hon. Friend said it was a monstrous thing that India should be made to contribute towards the cost of the Navy. There is a great controversy going on between the India Office, the Admiralty and the Treasury with reference to the contribution to the Navy. So acute has become the difference of opinion between the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the First Lord of the Admiralty, and myself, that we have referred this matter to arbitration. Originally it was hoped that a very distinguished Member of the other House—the Duke of Devonshire—would have been able to undertake the task of arbitrating between us; but he was unable to undertake that duty, and now it has been agreed to refer it to the final decision of the Prime Minister. India is now paying £50,000 a year for what we may call the police of the Indian seas—that is, for the protecting work of the British Fleet. My hon. Friend said we have no such thing as Indian commerce, that there is no Indian commerce. It is the commerce, according to my hon. Friend, of Great Britain; and my hon. Friend drew a glowing picture of some future state of affairs which would come into being after England was expelled from India, when there would be an enormous trade in India. I do not know what the trade of India was before the East India Company went there, or 20, 30, 40 and 50 years ago; but when my hon. Friend speaks of there being no Indian commerce, I can only tell him that, according to the last "Statistical Abstract," the value of merchandise and treasure bought by India, excluding Government stores and treasure, in 1892-3, which was not a particularly prosperous year, amounted to £79,000,000; and the value of what India sold was £113,000,000. Before I come to the Amendment, let me say a word or two in reply to the speech of the Seconder, who, I am bound to say, did not very accurately approach the wording of the Amendment. The hon. Member first charged us with the closing of the mints and with having convulsed the exchanges of the world. I am not going to open the bimetallic question this evening. But all I have to say is that the closing of the mints has been of great pecuniary advantage to India. Since I have been in office I have had the figures taken out of the value, month by month, of the coining and melting value of the rupee, and its currency value. The value of the rupee has been enhanced by the closing of the mints, and the percentage between the two values is one of those accurate, uniform laws which seem to pervade the whole realm of statistics, which you may wonder at and note, but which you cannot define. Practically it has not varied during the whole of that period in anything more than a fraction per cent. There has been a difference of between 19 and 20 per cent., by which the Government of India has received more for its bills through the closing of its mints. From April to the end of January I should have been nearly two and a quarter millions worse off than I am if the mints had not been closed; and the money would have had to be found from some other source of taxation. We had a full debate last year on the Famine Fund. There are Gentlemen who think that that surplus revenue over expenditure ought not to be applied to any purpose except the purposes which are connected with famine works, and also connected with the railway communication works. My hon. Friend knows that the vast scheme of works which was contemplated 10 or 12 years ago is now completed, and nothing further of a large character is necessary to be done. These works have been provided out of that fund. But the hon. Member spoke of the "misappropriation of the Famine Fund." I am not the Finance Minister of India, but I am the representative of the Finance Minister in this House, and I say that this is language which ought not to be used regarding the head of any finance department, unless one is prepared to prove it up to the hilt. "Misappropriation" is a very ugly word in connection with finance. My hon. Friend compared the Committee which we are anxious to see sitting to a bogus audit. I do not know what that means, unless it means "dishonest," the auditing of the accounts dishonestly, and the presentation of a dishonest report of what has been done. I do not see the similarity between a bogus auditor and a Committee of this House, and I cannot accept the very severe and harsh criticisms that my hon. Friend has indulged in. What is it my hon. Friend the mover of this Resolution proposes? He proposes that the Ministers should be directed—

> "to so adjust the financial relations between the United Kingdom and British India, with regard to all the expenditure incurred in the employment of Europeans in the British-Indian services, Civil and Military, in this country and in India"

—I suppose that includes every British soldier—

> "that some fair and adequate portion of such expenditure should be borne by the British Exchequer in proportion to the pecuniary and political benefits accruing to the United Kingdom from Your Gracious Majesty's sway over India; and that the British Treasury should sustain a fair and equitable proportion of all expenditure incurred on all military and political operations beyond the boundaries of India in which both Indian and British interests are jointly concerned."

If the Amendment stopped at the words "British Exchequer," I should not say that the subject was one undeserving of inquiry, although I do not understand his constitutional mode of dealing with the matter. It amounts to a serious change in the government and policy of India, and that would require the authority of an Act of Parliament. Who is to decide what is "a fair and equitable portion of all expenditure?" [An hon. MEMBER: The Duke of Devonshire.] I do not know that he or any number of men could deal with so difficult a matter. I do not say that we have not derived great benefits from India, but India has derived great benefits from her connection with England. My hon. Friend said there was no capital for improving the position of India. Where has the capital come from with which the railways and canals have been constructed, which have changed the whole face of India? It has come from here; it is British capital. [An hon. MEMBER: "Indian taxes."] I hope my hon. Friend will abstain from these interruptions; I carefully abstain from interrupting him. I do not know whether it is wished to penalise the employment of Europeans. Is it a crime as well as a calamity that Europeans have taken a part in the administration? That, I think, will not be the opinion of this House, of England, or of India—that the distinguished soldiers and civilians, and the vast army of English Public Servants who have during the last century carried on the affairs of India, have not served India well. England has no reason to be ashamed of them, and India has no ground to complain of them. We are asked to agree to some apportionment between the two countries, and I admit that difficulties have arisen between the two Exchequers with reference to this apportionment. This is not the first time this question has been raised. A Committee sat a great many years ago, at the instance of Mr. Fawcett. After that Committee had reported, in 1874, a departmental Committee was appointed of which the late Mr. Bouverie was the chairman, but the report was so unfavourable to India that it was practically impossible for the Government to impose it or for India to accept it. India being still justly dissatisfied with the apportionment of home charges, a departmental Inquiry took place under the auspices of the present Lord Derby, who was then Financial Secretary to the Treasury. This Committee gave the subject their consideration for 14 years, and during that time they issued a long series of Reports. But when that Inquiry closed, Lord Northbrook, the Chairman, was dissatisfied, and the Duke of Argyll—no small authority—was also dissatisfied. I shall quote the remarks of one of my own predecessors, Lord Kimberley, on this question. They were all agreed that there were substantial, just, and reasonable grounds of complaint with reference to these military costs. Lord Kimberley said—

> "Upon those questions of general policy which I have been invited to discuss, I do not think it at all safe to express very confident views. As to the share that India should bear of the expenses of expeditions out of that country, it appears to me that if India is really interested in an expedition, it is right that that

country should contribute a fair amount towards the cost of it. It is impossible to decide upon such matters beforehand. They must be dealt with at the time. All I can say is that we think India should be fairly and generously dealt with, and not charged with the cost of these expeditions unless she has a distinct interest in them. With regard to Egypt, for instance, India has a very considerable interest. The question of military charges is incapable of any complete solution; but it is one which I am quite certain successive Viceroys and Secretaries of State will continue to press upon the Home Government—that is, that we should not have to bear so large a share of the Army expenses. We must try to reduce them, but I am not very sanguine that we shall be able to do so. We shall not fail at the India Office to do our utmost to keep these charges within a reasonable amount.

I should like to quote one paragraph from the Duke of Argyll. He said—

> "We have only to consider what India would have been but for English rule, to see the enormous benefit she has derived from it. It is no exaggeration to say that our government of India is such a government as the world has never seen before. The Roman Empire in its greatest extent was not so wonderful. We govern 180,000,000 men of opposite races and religions, sometimes fanatically opposed to each other, and govern them more quietly, calmly and peacefully than we could govern our own people in Ireland. I desire to say nothing which would diminish the loyalty and sense of obligation which the Indian people feel and ought to feel towards us; and it would have the worst possible effect if there were any suspicion aroused in India that, for the purposes of making convenient Budgets or of Party Government, the people of India were being charged with expenses which ought really to be defrayed by the Home Government."

That, after all, is the chief point of my hon. Friend's complaint. [Mr. NAOROJI dissented.] Well, I am sorry there is not that common ground which I thought there was. I said last Session, in reply to the Member for the Forest of Dean, that the Government does not mean to inquire into the whole policy of the Indian Government. That is impracticable, and it is useless. Imperial policy is a question to be brought before this House—before Parliament. No Select Committee could be given the power to inquire into the wisdom, say, of the annexation of Burmah, the fortification of the North-west Frontier, the delimitation of boundaries which is now proceeding between India and Afghanistan—all these are matters of Imperial policy and are not questions for a Select Committee. There are those who think that an unfair share of home charges is placed on the Indian Exchequer, and this is a question with which a Committee or a Royal Commission is competent to deal; but, after the experience we have had, and the utter breakdown of the Committees which endeavoured to cover the whole range of Indian affairs, I shall be no party to embarking on any such fresh inquiry. The Government are anxious that there should be a full and complete inquiry in the direction I have indicated. We have not yet decided the mode in which that inquiry should be conducted. The Member for Banffshire last year proposed the appointment of a Royal Commission. That, however, I thought then would be rather a cumbrous method of proceeding, and I said that I much preferred myself a Parliamentary Inquiry; but I am bound to say that since then reasons have been urged upon me to show that a Parliamentary Inquiry is not the best mode. A Parliamentary Inquiry would cease when the existing Parliament ceased. Accidents happen to Parliaments. Parliaments only last a certain number of Sessions; they may come suddenly to an end. Accidents, too, sometimes happen to right hon. and hon. Gentlemen. Though they are Members of one Parliament, they may not be Members of the next; and it has been urged upon me whether it would not be desirable to have an impartial, small, but thoroughly efficient Royal Commission to inquire into the question. I do not wish to express any opinion on this point at the present time. The Amendment of the hon. Member is an unconstitutional Amendment. We cannot direct the repeal of an Act of Parliament. That is a matter for Parliament alone. With reference to the opinion expressed in the Amendment that a fair and adequate portion of the expenditure should be borne by the British Exchequer, we are quite willing that such an inquiry should take place, and we should be quite satisfied to abide by the result. In conclusion I would say to the House that, whatever may be our financial views, whether our policy has been wise or unwise—I say, not only for my colleagues in the Government but also for my colleagues at the India Office and for the Indian Government, that it is their desire not to oppress India, not to bleed India, not to injure India, but to go on in that career of progress that has hitherto characterised the rule of India by Great Britain, in the belief that that rule has conferred on the people of India an unspeakable boon, while it has redounded in no small degree to the glory and honour of the United Kingdom.

SIR D. H. MACFARLANE (Argyll) thought that no case had been made out against the Government of India which could justify the matter being brought before either a Committee or the House of Commons with a Royal Commission. Still he had been asking for years that there should be a Commission or a Committee appointed to ascertain the real facts, and to show to the people of India that they were treated fairly. It was most desirable in his opinion, that that should be made known to the people of India. Let them take the small matter of the payment of the Opium Commission. A portion of that expense was to be charged to the Revenues of India, but the people of India did not ask for that Commission. It was thrust upon them by the House of Commons. If there was, as the result of it, any interference with the habits of the people, it would not be strange if there was an insurrection from one end of India to the other. He cordially agreed in the tribute paid to the Civil Servants in India. Nothing could surpass the high character of their services or of the benefits they had conferred upon India; but at the same time it might be said that probably as good men might be got for smaller remuneration. There might be a saving made in that way, but he did not know that it was desirable, for if there was one thing more necessary than another, it was that the officials should be above reproach. He would remind his hon. Friend that the chief duty of district officers in India was to keep one native from oppressing another, and to restrain the arbitrary conduct of the native police. This country had saved India from the continual wars and troubles that used to afflict her, and had made the country so safe that a single man could walk through it without being molested. That, he thought, was something to be proud of. He did not deny that this country derived very considerable advantage from India, but the advantage was not all on one side. The greatest blessing that India ever saw was the landing of the first Englishman on her shores. England administered India with justice and fairness, and had succeeded in that in a way that no other country in the world had succeeded. Let a Commission be appointed to go carefully into the question, and if it was found that anything was unfairly charged to India, let reparation be made. He repudiated, as far as he could, the general innuendoes of his hon. Friend, but he should support the demand he had made on the grounds which he had stated.

*MR. J. SEYMOUR KEAY (Elgin and Nairn) thought that the figures of the right hon. Gentleman, with regard to the number of Europeans in the employ of the Government of India, ought to be multiplied three or four-fold in order to get at the truth. Only about three years ago a return was laid on the Table of the House on his Motion, by the courtesy of the Under Secretary of State for India in the late Government, and there the whole thing would be found in black and white. He would therefore in the briefest way take from it the number of, and the emoluments paid to, Europeans, only reckoning those in receipt of a salary of 1,000 rupees and upwards. Instead of 7,000, the number stated by the right hon. Gentleman, there were no less than 28,000 Europeans in the service of the Government of India, drawing a salary out of the Indian Revenue of more than 1,000 rupees, and their salaries aggregated no less a sum than 154,000,000 rupees every year. His hon. Friend the Member for Central Finsbury estimated the whole amount of the pay of all Europeans at about 200,000,000 rupees. He did not know whether he included the rank and file of the British Army, but if so his figure was under the mark and not over it. It was further material to ask where were these 154,000,000 of rupees received and expended. The Return showed that 60,000,000 of them, or 40 per cent., were remitted to and spent in England in the shape of pensions. The same Return showed that only 11,000 persons who were natives of India were allowed to be employed in the service of their own country, at over Rs. 1000 per year, and that only 30,000,000 of rupees were divided amongst them. Therefore, retired and ineffective Europeans received double the amount disbursed among the natives of India. The fact that such an enormous sum was spent upon retired Europeans was in itself enough to show that there was ground for moving the Amendment in the benefit which the English nation received under the system which now obtained.

MR. W. S. CAINE (Bradford, E.) expressed his regret if he had unduly interrupted the Secretary for India with interjections, which he thought were pertinent, and by which he thought he might be saved the making of a speech. If the Government really meant to grant a Committee—and the right hon. Gentleman's instincts in that direction were sound—it would scarcely be necessary to divide on the Amendment. There was no doubt there did exist in the minds of the educated natives of India, as reflected not only by the National Congress but also by the Press, a strong impression that this country did to some extent milk India by charging to her revenue much that ought by right to fall on our own Exchequer. If it could be understood that the reference to the Committee could be so framed as to make it quite clear that the Committee was to investigate the relative proportions in which certain charges ought to be distributed, then this Amendment might probably be withdrawn. [Mr. FOWLER: That would be the meaning of the Inquiry.] Then he was quite content. Last Session he called attention to the charge upon India, for 12 years, of £10,000, as a subsidy for the cable between the Mauritius and the Continent of Africa; and he was told that the justification for the charge was the strategic position of the Mauritius as regarded the defence of the Indian Empire. That was a charge which ought never to have been imposed on India at all, and it was but a single instance of charges that ought to be borne by this country but which were cast upon India. As to the British Army in India, we should withdraw a considerable proportion of it without scruple if we required it; and it was really in India for British purposes. The men served in India for four years out of seven; and, if India paid for taking them, Great Britain ought to pay for bringing them back again. The Committee ought to be appointed soon, or otherwise there would be disappointment in India.

*MR. G. N. CURZON (Lancashire, Southport) said the House would have listened with respect and admiration to the straightforward and statesmanlike speech of the Secretary for India, and particularly to his broad general statement of the services Great Britain had rendered and was rendering to India, and of the spirit which animated us in our relations with India. The right hon. Gentleman made a clear statement as to the nature of the promised Inquiry into the financial relations between Great Britain and India; and, whether the Inquiry were conducted by a Committee or a Commission, he believed it would have the co-operation and support of both sides of the House. From the speeches of the Mover and Seconder of the Amendment, it would appear that they must be singularly oblivious of former Debates in that House. Every argument they had used had been heard before, and those who recollected the Budget speech of the Secretary of State last summer would be aware how complete was the answer given to the statements that had now been repeated. Nevertheless, the same platitudes, the same worn-out, threadbare, and preposterous fallacies that were then brought out to be shattered, pulverized, and destroyed, had come up to be again answered six months afterwards. He must say a word upon the concluding part of the Amendment, to the operation of which the Secretary of State had not found occasion to allude. The Mover asked the House to say—

> "That the British Treasury should sustain a fair and equitable portion of all expenditure incurred on all military and political operations beyond the boundaries of India in which both Indian and British interests are jointly concerned."

This was a somewhat vague and indefinite proposition, but the hon. Member explained that he would adopt the boundaries which existed when the Government of India was taken over by the Crown nearly 40 years ago. The hon. Member did not lay stress upon the fact, but the wording of the Amendment would bring political as well as military operations within the rule. Did the hon. Member really know what were the boundaries of India in 1857? Had he any idea how the India of to-day differed from the India of 1857? Did he know the preposterous demand he was making upon intelligence and statesmanship? The Amendment would apply to our operations in Beluchistan, which were now not military but political, and were concerned with the organization of an administration. Was the cost of that to be met jointly by the Indian and the British Exchequer? The proposed rule would mean that the cost of the Waziri Expedition and of boundary demarcation in Afghanistan should be borne by the two Exchequers, and also of the campaigns on the North-West frontier, which were provoked by turbulent frontier tribes who were repelled by local levies. Lastly, it would mean that the expense of the annexation of Upper Burma, authorized, of course, by this House, but in no sense an operation directly affecting British as distinct from Indian interests, should also have been divided between the two Exchequers. He hoped the legitmate responsibility of England for military operations upon the Indian frontier would never be ignored, and he could conceive of occasions of invasion when a demand might legitimately be made upon this country for co-operation. But that these small frontier wars and expeditions, and the civil organization resulting from their successful issue, should be borne by us in common with India was an idea which could not commend itself to any but the hon. Gentleman and the section for whom he spoke. When he complained that the people of India had no voice in the expenditure of their country, he forgot that, by the Legislative Councils Bill of the late Government, which he was fortunate enough to pass, for the first time Members of those Councils were at liberty not only to ask questions, but also to make statements and speeches, upon the Budgets of the Government. The hon. Member must know that the Government of India was conducted in as fierce a light as that of this country, and perhaps even under a more concentrated blaze. The right to ask questions and to make speeches was a positive guarantee, not merely that the views of those for whom the hon. Member spoke would be represented, but that nothing in the nature of substantial injustice would be done. It would have been more to the point if the hon. Member, instead of referring to military and political operations, had alluded to certain Commissions of Inquiry ordered by this House, and the cost of which was thrown upon India. He listened with astonishment to the speech of the hon. Baronet the Member for Banff. The hon. Baronet was a distinguished member of a body of civilians whose rule in India had been eulogised by more than one speaker, and of whom it might be justly said that they were the pride and glory of their country. Yet, coming back here with the traditions of the Service upon him, with his great knowledge of Indian affairs, he lost no opportunity of traducing the body of which he was once a member, and slandering the great and splendid work it was carrying on.

*SIR W. WEDDERBURN said he admitted that the Service was doing good work, but he contended that it was done on a scale too expensive for the country. He had, in his speech, made no charge against the service to which he had had the honour to belong. But he wished its members to be the servants of the people and not their masters. He had no wish whatever to "traduce" the Service.

*MR. CURZON said he was glad to have that repudiation, but the hon. Baronet's speech undoubtedly supplied this foundation for his charge—that, if the bulk of his accusations were true as to the poverty of the people of India and the oppression of the Government, it would constitute a grave charge against those responsible for the administration of the country. The hon. Baronet complained that no reference was made in the Queen's Speech to matters connected with India. For his own part, so far from deploring that India was not mentioned, he was glad that the condition of affairs in India was so satisfactory that there was no need to allude to it in the Queen's Speech. The assumption underlying the speech of the hon. Baronet was, that the military expenditure of the Indian Government was unwise and unjustifiable and their policy rash and unsound. He himself had made, in a humble way, some attempt to understand the question, and he deliberately stated that, broadly speaking, the frontier policy of India, with the great expenditure it had entailed, had been not merely a wise and statesmanlike, but an absolutely necessary, policy. No doubt great mistakes, involving enormous financial responsibility, had been committed. Nobody would now deny the fatal policy and ruinous cost entailed by the first Afghan war. But we had learnt by experience, and were, he should imagine, extremely unlikely to make any such blunder again. The policy of military expenditure, the frontier expeditions, and the cost of setting up an organised Administration after victory had been won, constituted a policy of insurance which we were bound to pay for our great Empire. Our long immunity from war in India had been simply due to the effect of the millions of money we had been content to spend upon that object. The only way, in his judgment, by which we could escape the invasion of India was to render invasion sufficiently dangerous to make it not worth while for any one to attempt it. Seriously as he thought that the House should scrutinise the various acts of the Indian Government and their consequent financial responsibility, for his own part he was of opinion that the policy of Lord Lansdowne, Lord Roberts, and the great men who for the past 15 years had been making secure the frontiers of India, was one that should meet with the gratitude of this country and the support of the House.

*MR. A. WEBB (Waterford, W.) denied that the hon. Baronet the Member for Banff had either traduced or slandered the Civil Service of India. The members of the Service were servants of the people. They should not be above criticism, and he regretted those who criticised their public actions should be accused of traducing and slandering them. What struck a casual observer like himself (who had recently spent some time in India) was the extreme poverty of the mass of the people and the extent to which they were taxed. When he considered what wages were in England he wondered how wage-earners in India managed to live upon the low wages they obtained. The services of horses and dogs commanded a higher price than those of men in some kinds of employment. It was his firm conviction that both policy and justice required that the people of this country should pay a larger proportion of Indian military expenditure than at present. He believed that we ought to be prepared to pay a larger portion of the cost of Indian frontier wars, and, if we did so, it would redound largely to our honour and to the satisfaction of the people of India. He strongly deprecated a feeling of self-satisfaction with regard to our Indian Empire. It was a great charge and a serious responsibility, and we ought not to be too self-complacent as to it. The Secretary of State for India intimated that the government of India had been uniformly good in the past. Good intentions were by no means a proof that right had been done. In Ireland the British Government and officials, with the best intentions, had, in the past, failed, because they had not been acting in accordance with the wishes of the people of Ireland. He was a supporter of the present Government through his Party; he was an admirer of the Secretary of State for India; but he regretted the temper which the right hon. Gentleman had shown in treating this Indian question, and especially in the way he met the hon. Member for Finsbury. Without going further into the question, he believed that, no matter how well-intentioned our Secretaries and Councils on this side were, they should take more efficient means than at present to seek the advice and ascertain the wishes and desires of the natives themselves. Until this were done we should not be on safe ground. He desired to support the Amendment.

SIR R. TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston) said that he was very unwilling to trouble the House, and it was very desirable that this discussion should close. Something more ought, however, to be said. From the remarks of some hon. Members opposite it might be supposed that our military expenditure in India was too high—in other words, that our fighting strength there could be reduced. He did not suppose that it could be argued that the military expenditure could be reduced unless the fighting power were lowered also. He would like the House and the country to consider whether the fighting strength of India was more than what was wanted, or whether it was less than we wanted. He would advise any hon. Member who wished to understand the fundamental essentials of the military problem in India carefully to peruse the work of his hon. Friend the Member for Southport, published a few years ago, upon "Russia in Central Asia." That work showed that the advance carried on by Russia for more than a generation had carried that Power to the very gates of Afghanistan; it showed that, upon a declaration of war, Russia could pour her forces like a thunderbolt over Afghanistan; and it estimated Russia's forces, and went on to consider what reply England could make from India. Though he hoped that the gathering of the forces there represented would be enough, yet it would require all that we knew to do so. Let them consider well the awful issues that would depend on such a conflict, and let the House and the country say whether we had more than enough—whether, in fact, we had enough—to meet the dread issue of such an eventuality. And if not, how could it be assumed that our military expenditure in India could be reduced? Suppose we could put, at the outside, 50,000 men into the field to meet such an enemy, that would be barely enough; and anyone who considered the relative muster of the forces of the two Empires would pray God from his heart to aid our soldiers at that grave moment. Such grave issues as this ought not to be trifled with, as they were always trifled with, both by the Mover and Seconder of this Amendment. He would tell the hon. Member who moved it that England would suffer far more if things were to go wrong with the British arms in India than would India herself. The frontier defences of India were wanted for India, and not for England. What did England care for a stony desert to the west of Merv or a tract of waste land in Afghanistan if it were not for the sake of India? With regard to Burma, upon what ground could it be asked that the expenses of annexing Upper Burma should be borne by England? Burma was an integral part of the British Empire in the East at the time of that annexation. What did we care for the upper regions of the Burmese rivers, except for the sake of India? He recognised that the mover of this Amendment came from one of the most loyal sections of the people of British India. He highly respected the noble clan from which the hon. Member came, and he quite admitted that it contained some of the bluest blood of all the nationalities on the earth. But, coming from such a clan, speaking, as the hon. Member did, in high terms of the benefits of British rule in India, he was astonished at his bringing forward such an Amendment as this. He did not think that the speeches made by the hon. Member in that House could be delivered by him with safety before his fellow-countrymen in Bombay. His fellow-clansmen would be astonished at such utterances.

Mr. D. NAOROJI remarked that he had said the same things there very often.

Sir R. TEMPLE, continuing, said that this Amendment was not seriously regarded by any other Member in the House except, perhaps, by the Seconder of the Amendment and, possibly, by the last speaker. Did the hon. Member for Finsbury suppose, if he were to tell the British electorate that India was putting a burden upon our Budget, that it would not be very awkward and would set up jealousies between those who were interested in trade with India and those who were not? It was time for someone to stand up and expose in their true light the sentiments which had been expressed. He was astonished that the hon. Member should make such a proposition as that contained in his Amendment and could suppose that it could be seriously regarded either by a British House of Commons or by a British electorate. These questions had cropped up, and had been pulverized Session after Session. He himself had contributed to their pulverization, but they cropped up again just as if they had never been dealt with before. Again and again they were told that the people of India were dying of starvation—the very people who were increasing and multiplying more than any other nation under Heaven. They were told that the people were half starving when they were sending £150,000,000 sterling annually to foreign countries, and when they were flooding the British corn markets with grain to the dismay of the British farmer. They were told this at a time when the trade of India was expanding, when their agriculture was spreading fast, and their capital could be shown to be growing and accumulating. His hon. Friend who had just sat down urged as an argument that the wages were very low; but the prices were also low. These misrepresentations had been constantly exposed. As one who had served the Municipality of London in one of the poorest parts of the Metropolis he ought to know something of the distress which prevailed here, and, nation for nation, country for country, he declared that there was far less real distress in India than there was in this country, and that the actual want and necessity was greater and more perceptible here than in India. He utterly denied the hon. Member's statements as to the growing poverty in India; he believed the opposite was the case. A great deal of our commerce we owed to India, but what did India owe to us? The people of India owed their lives to us, their homes, hearths, freedom, rights, and liberty. It astonished him when he considered the way in which his countrymen had given their lives in the service of India that such scant justice should be shown them by the hon. Member for the Central Division of Finsbury. He would add his testimony to that which he was sure would be borne by every Member on that side of the House who was acquainted with Indian affairs to the remarkable skill, ability, and patriotic spirit with which the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for India had defended Indian interests. He congratulated him on the statesmanlike capacity he had shown in dealing with Indian problems.

MR. NAOROJI, in asking leave to withdraw the Amendment, inquired whether the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for India adhered to his pronouncement in regard to the Committee of Investigation. [MR. H. H. FOWLER assented.] He very much regretted that decision.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

COLONEL J. P. NOLAN (Galway, N.) moved that the following words should be added as an Amendment to the Address—

> "And we humbly express our regret that Your Majesty's Gracious Speech did not contain a reference to the severe distress existing in some parts of Ireland, and failed to convey an assurance that public works would be undertaken to alleviate such distress."

He said he had been very much surprised that no reference was made to this distress in the Queen's Speech. He did not think there was any necessity for giving proofs of the severe distress at present existing in Ireland. In the first place the Poor Law Guardians had, almost all over the western part of Ireland, passed resolutions deploring the distress which existed, or which they apprehended. In the second place, it had been, to a very great extent, admitted by the Chief Secretary for Ireland. He did not wish to exaggerate the prevailing distress, but there was in some districts a very large failure of the potatoes. Some of the potatoes had been frost-bitten, and others were attacked by the disease, and the crop of potatoes was poorer in every way as a general rule. The action of the disease in Ireland had been very irregular Another cause of distress was the low price of pigs. This was really a most important matter to the Irish peasant. There were a few people who would have potatoes, but for a large number the supply would give out in March, and unless something was done for them there would be three months, and perhaps four, of the greatest distress from this cause. The peasants possibly might live upon their live stock, but that would be to cripple them for five or six years at least. There was no large labouring class in Galway and Mayo, and other parts of Ireland affected; the people must be small holders of land, or nothing. The labour market was very poorly paid, and unless the peasant had some land, and the means of stocking it, he was very badly off indeed. He hoped to ascertain in the course of the evening what the Chief Secretary was going to do to meet this state of affairs. What had he done? He was going to introduce a Seed Potatoes Bill, and he had taken upon himself the responsibility of telling the Local Government Board, and the Board of Works, that they might advance money to the Unions to purchase potatoes. By his prompt action, the people would be able to buy proper seed potatoes in the market, but the Bill could not come into effect until the end of July, and therefore his action, although extremely useful, could have no immediate effect in stopping the distress. If by expending a reasonable sum on relief works the country could be made hereafter passably prosperous, the Exchequer would gain an advantage in the end in the form of increased receipts from taxation. He wanted the Government to dip their hands into the national pocket in order to relieve the distressed poor of Ireland from the necessity of selling their stock and household goods. In making this request he was not asking for any really British money. The sums collected by taxation in Ireland were considerably larger than the amount expended in Ireland by the Government, and all he asked was that the balance transmitted this year from that country should be smaller than usual, and that the difference should be devoted to relief works. He, therefore, did not occupy the position of a beggar asking for money. His demand was, that a little more of their own money should remain in Ireland, and that the Government should forego a little of the tribute annually paid by Ireland to the British Exchequer. At least £15,000,000 were expended every year in warlike stores, including ships, guns, fortifications, &c. Only some £50,000 or £60,000 out of this amount went to Ireland, and that went to Belfast for the construction of engines. Irishmen were justified in asking to share in this expenditure on warlike stores—£500,000 of it ought surely to go to Ireland. If there were not in that country the same facilities for manufacturing warlike stores as were found in England, the £500,000 ought still to go to Ireland as a set-off to the large amount expended in Great Britain on stores of that kind. The undertaking of public works in Ireland as a means of alleviating distress, and at the same time of benefiting the country permanently, was not a Party question, and there was no reason why all Irish Members should not support his proposal. He asked Conservatives to support it, as being in accordance with the policy of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Manchester (Mr. Balfour) when he was in Office. He hoped that the present Chief Secretary would rival the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Manchester in this kind of well-doing, and that when his term of Office came to an end there would be public works which could be pointed to as having been undertaken by Mr. Morley. The Congested Districts Board was trying to improve the condition of the worst parts of the country, but it had not enough money at its command to cope with anything approaching to exceptional distress. Then the action of the Board was restricted within certain limits, and did not extend beyond Connemara and parts of Mayo, Donegal, and Kerry. The greater part of Ireland was not within its jurisdiction. The Congested Districts Board, therefore, was powerless to cope with the existing situation. Works for the relief of distress ought to be such as to effect some permanent improvement in the country. In his own district he should say that drainage was most needed. He did not mean the draining of great rivers which were navigable, because that was a matter of extreme difficulty, involving complicated engineering problems. What he had in mind was the drainage of certain localities in Roscommon, Donegal, Mayo, and elsewhere. But he would not quarrel with the Chief Secretary about the nature of the public works to be undertaken if the right hon. Gentleman would only promise to prepare a suitable and adequate scheme. He did not much like the right hon. Gentleman's declaration that he was carefully watching certain districts. Why was "watching" necessary? Of course inspection was necessary, but as soon as the condition of districts had been ascertained it ought to be easy to come to a decision upon the question of their wants. Considering that no warlike stores were turned out in Ireland, he thought that, as an equivalent, the Chief Secretary might undertake, though on a small scale, some means of developing certain parts of the country in order to help in the relief of the existing distress.

MR. SEXTON (Kerry, N.) said, the fiscal question, or the question of taxation, had a direct and important bearing on the claim the Irish Members had then to make. It was not agreeable to him and his colleagues to have to make such claims, but the recurrence of those partial famines was one of the incidents of the incapacity and neglect of Imperial Administration, and they might be expected to recur from time to time until the resources of Ireland were placed in the hands of Irishmen themselves. Last year was the worst year in Ireland since 1879; indeed, some thought it the worst year since 1848. There could be no doubt of the existence and extent of the distress. In 1892, the last year of Office of the late Government, the Revenue derived by the Imperial purse from Ireland was considerably less than in the past year; yet the late Chief Secretary spent in 1892 in the country about half a million more than the present Chief Secretary had expended during the past year. New imposts were placed on Ireland last year which produced £200,000 more in Revenue than was received in the preceding year, yet much less had been spent in the country. This was the basis of their claim that Ireland was entitled to some assistance. The hon. and gallant Gentleman had expressed regret that there was no reference in the Queen's Speech to the distress in Ireland; but the important point was, not that there was no allusion to the question in the Speech, but rather what were the intentions of the Government with regard to Ireland. He was bound to give credit to the Chief Secretary for giving notice on the opening day of the Session of his intention to bring in a Bill to supply seed to small occupiers and farmers in certain districts in Ireland, and that he had taken upon himself the responsibility of making certain advances. They, therefore, knew that the right hon. Gentleman had undertaken to do something; it might be inadequate, but still it was a better earnest that the Government would undertake some means of relieving the distress than a mere verbal assurance in the Queen's Speech. It was his duty in the month of November last year to bring under the notice of the Chief Secretary the distress which existed among the poorer occupiers in the extensive Union of Listowel. Ample and reliable evidence was furnished by the Poor Law Guardians as to the extent and depth of the distress, showing that the potato crop had not yielded more than one half in most cases, and not more than one-eighth in others, of the usual amount; and yet when a Local Government Board Inspector was sent to inquire into the nature of the distress, he reported that the potato crop had been an excellent one. On the other hand, the Union officials were agreed that the crop had failed to a very serious extent, and that the distress was patent. The fact was that the Inspector had not enquired of those who were in the best position to furnish him with accurate information. He was convinced, by the unanimous resolutions which had been passed by Boards of Guardians, that great and bitter distress now prevailed all along the Western seaboard of Ireland. It would take more than the Report of a Local Government Inspector moving about the country to remove that impression from his mind, and he hoped the Chief Secretary would adopt means of securing accurate information as to the prevalence of the distress. What, then, was the position? The potato crop had failed. The potato was still the staple food of the people during several months of the year. The supply having run terribly short, the price of the commodity was doubled or trebled. Consequently, on the one hand the labourer was unable to purchase a necessary of life, and on the other the farmer was deprived of the means of employing labour as well. The people could not live; they would not have the means. In this condition of affairs he respectfully, but earnestly, protested against the application of the Workhouse tests. Whether the indoor or outdoor test was applied, the result was most fallacious and misleading. As regarded the former, to say that there were not more people in the Workhouses now than a year ago proved nothing. A solitary member of a family could not be taken in; the whole family must go. In the case of a poor labouring family, bearing in mind the great repugnance they felt to the Workhouse, they must have reached a pitch of suffering and starvation almost imperilling life before they would consent to go into the House. As regarded the outdoor test, again, if a family held more than a quarter of an acre of land they could not have outdoor relief. A monument this of the wisdom of Irish administration! The fortunate possessor of a quarter of an acre of land was held disentitled to outdoor relief under any circumstances! There would be, and were, tens of thousands of families who were starving but still able to walk about, and they did not come within the definitions which would enable the Guardians to give them outdoor relief. He, therefore, asked the right hon. Gentleman to revise the whole system of inquiry and inspection, and to lay down some rules which would give some guarantee that the evidence given by the Inspectors in their Reports should correspond with the facts of the case. He also urged the expediency of extending the term of repayment for the seed potato loans. It was very hard to impose on the Guardians such conditions as obliged them to collect the whole of the money within two years from an extremely poor class of occupiers, and he would, therefore, venture with every confidence to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he could not extend to four, or even to three, years the repayment of the loan. As to the Public Works, he agreed that it was a rather small and trivial system that had been set on foot, and he rather thought the Department were trying their ingenuity to avoid starting important works. He hoped they might hear from the right hon. Gentleman that, considering all the circumstances of taxation and of revenue, and the depth and extent of the distress, the Government would be prepared to deal with this question in no niggardly spirit. In some districts lines of light railways could be constructed with great advantage, as, for example, between Tarbet, connecting with the sea and Listowel. The right hon. Gentleman might consider also the desirability of reverting to the system of loans, free of interest, such as was made to the landlords in 1880. It was a cruel thing to set up central Public Works 10 or 12 miles away, and to drag the people 10 or 15 miles away from their homes, and to call that relief. It was torture under the name of relief. But if the right hon. Gentleman would, under reasonable conditions, establish a system of loans of moderate amount to occupiers of land, free of interest, either out of the balance of the Church Fund or any other fund that might be available, he thought that would complete a system which, without such an element, would be altogether inadequate to meet the necessities of the case. Whilst the right hon. Gentleman might think he had spoken in a critical spirit, he would admit the responsibility which lay upon the Irish Members in the presence of such suffering and danger imposed that critical spirit upon them, and would not mistake anything he had said as implying any want of confidence in himself, because he knew the right hon. Gentleman had to contend against a hide-bound official system. If the personal spirit of the right hon. Gentleman could, merely by the exertion of his will, dominate the official system of Ireland, the Irish Members need take very little trouble in that House to press such matters as these upon him.

MR. WILLIAM FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick), said that relief in the way of grants of seed potatoes should not be restricted to persons whose valuation was under £15. He thought that any one in need of seed potatoes whose valuation was under £50 ought to receive the relief. It was hard to fix so fast a rule that a man valued at £15 could receive seed potatoes, while his neighbour, equally destitute but valued at £15 10s., was denied the relief. As an addition to the present method of relieving distress in Ireland, he suggested the construction of new harbours and the improvement of existing harbours in fishing districts. The fishing industry of Ireland was entirely neglected. Foreigners fished all round the coasts of Ireland, and owing to the absence of that assistance from the State which countries having paternal Governments received, the people of Ireland were unable to reap any of the harvest of fish which abounded around their coasts. Light Railways were also much needed in some districts of the country. Again, if the Chief Secretary could see his way to have more labourers' cottages erected, it would give much-needed employment, and, at the same time, provide house accommodation for labourers, which was badly wanted in many parts of the country. New roads and main and surface drains would also be very useful. He contended that Ireland was entitled to an equal share with England of the increased taxation. Ireland was not at all as prosperous as England, and one of the reasons why there was so much destitution in Ireland was, because the taxation wrung out of Ireland was mainly spent in England. He contended that the workhouse test of destitution was fallacious. It was a matter beyond contradiction by any one who knew anything of the feelings of the people of Ireland that many of the people would rather starve than enter the workhouse. In England it was, moreover, much easier to get out-door relief than in Ireland. He was not, however, much in favour of outdoor-relief, except where it was found to be necessary, because when carried to excess it had a demoralising tendency amongst the poor. Irishmen could not, from their experience of the past, have much faith in the permanent officials. There seemed to be a want of sympathy between the permanent officials and the people whom they governed. It was a mistake to suppose that in these details Parliament governed Ireland; the permanent officials were the real rulers. He wished to urge upon the Chief Secretary that in this matter it was necessary to look ahead a little. Mere temporary expedients would not cure this disease of Irish distress. If the present system continued, public works might be necessary for a period which the Treasury would not care to contemplate. The institution of a Board of Agriculture for Ireland would be a great benefit in helping the Irish peasant to be less entirely dependent upon the potato crop. It was a most extraordinary thing that the United Kingdom imported foreign produce to the amount of hundreds of millions every year, while the country was going out of cultivation. If the right hon. Gentleman could devise a scheme whereby the waste lands and the idle hands could be brought together, it would be a national benefaction. At present £20,000,000 of taxation was being raised for protecting a mercantile marine which poured into the country foreign produce of all kinds, a great part of which we could produce at home. He had made these practical suggestions irrespective of Party, for this was not a Party question. It was a question of humanity, in which all sections of the House could co-operate in the spirit of Christian co-operation. He trusted that the Chief Secretary would give the question his serious attention, and try to devise a remedy for a very serious defect.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) said, that hon. Members opposite were more interested in this question than he could possibly be; for he represented a part of the country which fortunately did not suffer in this way. In Ulster they were not exposed to the cruel sufferings common in the special area on the west coast of Ireland. To begin with, he hoped that the question of distress would not be complicated with any question of the rights and wrongs of taxation, and the financial relations between Great Britain and Ireland. No doubt in that respect Ireland might make out a good case; but this was a question of humanity. What he desired to say next was, that wherever exceptional distress was proved to exist, a prompt and sufficient remedy for it ought to be found. But in his mind the point was, that the proof of this exceptional distress should be sufficient. He did not undervalue the testimony of Boards of Guardians in Ireland. They were the only representative authorities on which the State could rely for information in certain lines of action. But human nature was the same all the world over; and if a district were suffering in any way, though the suffering were not exceptional, and if relief were being given in exceptional cases; there would be a natural desire that that relief should not be confined to the exceptional cases, but should be extended to the other. These Boards of Guardians, like other local bodies, were exposed to pressure. All he would say with respect to them, therefore, was that when an allegation of exceptional distress was made by one of them, it should constitute a *prima-facie* case for inquiry by the Government. He also thought that the Government ought to be very careful in these inquiries. It was quite true that in Ireland there were hide-bound officials—men accustomed to dealing with distress, who had become callous by constant association with it. In sending those officials to institute inquiries, care ought to be taken that they were in communication with those who had the best information at their disposal. In matters of this kind, he believed that the strong ought to help to bear the infirmities of the weak; and he had risen to say that, in relieving exceptional distress, wherever it had been proved to exist, the Chief Secretary might rely on the co-operation of hon. Members from the North of Ireland, whose constituents were free from the cruel sufferings of other districts, but must sympathise with them. He cared for no Irish policy which did not recognise that the district on the western coast of Ireland was exceptionally situated, and required exceptional treatment from any Government or Party.

MR. J. DILLON (Mayo, E.) said that the Nationalist Members were grateful to the hon. Member for his assistance in this matter. He fully accepted the principle laid down by the hon. Member that the Government, before deciding to take exceptional steps for the relief of distress in Ireland, were bound to hold a careful inquiry into the facts. But what the Nationalist Members had urged upon successive Governments was, that inquiry should be held in good time, and when the local representative bodies had urged the existence of distress; and that the inquiry should be held in some form which would command the confidence of the people as to its results. Past bitter experience in Ireland had led them to distrust, he would not say all, but many, inspectors of the Local Government Board, particularly on account of the secret way in which their inquiries were held. They ought to be held in some open fashion, so that those who lived in the localities might have an opportunity of publicly bringing their knowledge before the Inspectors. He knew that the House was only too familiar with demands from Ireland for the relief of distress. To Irishmen, as could be imagined, there was nothing more painful or humiliating.

Colonel NOLAN (Galway, N.): Do not include me. It is not humiliating to me.

Mr. DILLON said, that at any rate he felt the humiliation. One of the reasons for his discontent with the present system of Government was, that it had produced this condition of things, which ought not to exist in any properly governed country in the world. Some hon. Members might think that Irish Members were premature or too clamorous in their appeals. Let them read the history of Ireland, and learn that on more than one occasion it had been proved beyond all question that, so far from being too early in their appeals for relief of distress, the Irish Representatives had been too late. In the terrible years from 1846 to 1848 thousands perished of starvation before any relief came to their assistance. In these and many subsequent years fault might have been found with the representatives of the Irish people that they did not raise their voices on behalf of the starving peasants in the west of Ireland in time. In the whole of Ireland there was hardly a district so universally distressed and congested as East Mayo, the constituency which he represented. He believed that in every period of distress that took place, the dark cloud which settled so often on the people of Ireland, settled with peculiar darkness over the people of East Mayo. The Swinford Union, which covered the greater portion of his constituency, had a population of 48,000 persons, and the valuation was £41,000, or less than £1 per head; in other words the average rent of 10,000 families who constituted his constituency was about £4 per family. The result of that condition of congestion was this: They had a population always living on the verge of famine. In prosperous years they lived in a very humble, parsimonious way, in a state of great poverty, it was true, but still able to keep themselves alive. The moment there was any failure of crops starvation ensued, and the people had nothing to fall back upon. It was therefore a painful and humiliating duty on the part of the Irish Representatives to force on the Government the necessity of relieving that state of affairs. The relief to be given in the Swinford district must be mainly in the nature of relief works. Personally, he believed that the distress which existed in many districts in the west of Ireland was more acute than in 1890. In that year there was a Conservative Government in power, and the Government spent nearly £1,250,000 to meet that distress, while a public fund, in charge of the Leader of the Opposition, also existed. In his own constituency the Government spent not less than £40,000 or £50,000, and he trusted that the Chief Secretary would not forget the example which was then set. On the chronic aspect of this question, he had raised his voice more than once by putting to successive Governments the question—

> "Are they content that this system should continue, that large portions of the population in Ireland should go on living in this abject and most demoralising condition, unable to make both ends meet, and always living on the brink of starvation, to be pushed over that brink every four or five years?"

He had heard it stated that this aspect of the question had nothing to do with rent. What was the amount of rent taken out of East Mayo alone? In Swinford Union the rent was about £50,000; since 1890, therefore, roughly speaking, £200,000 had been levied in rent in that district. Now, it would take £20,000 to save the people from starvation by the creation of public works. The people, indeed, were paying £50,000 or £60,000 in excessive rent; and this was a point which ought to be considered by the Government. He admitted that a first step had been taken towards the solution of the congested districts problem, but he maintained that, while the Congested Districts Board was an excellent institution, having done very good work, it was insufficient to cope with or to solve this problem, and that, with its present constitution, powers, and resources, it would not solve it for the next 200 years. Would it not be better to make one great effort to constitute a body in Ireland as a sort of insurance against this perpetual recurrence of famine, with sufficient powers and resources to grapple with the problem, and to put the people in the position of becoming self-supporting for the future? He directed the attention of the Chief Secretary to the Woodford district of County Galway, where the people who had settled under the Congested Districts Act had not received a penny of work since the Board was constituted. He was informed that acute distress prevailed there. Then at Falcarragh, County Donegal, acute distress also existed. If steps could be taken to promote the scheme for the river drainage in East Mayo, he believed that employment could be given to many persons, while effecting a great improvement in the surrounding country. He believed that the Chief Secretary had devoted his attention to this distress with the greatest possible assiduity for many weeks past, and he had every confidence that the right hon. Gentleman would do all in his power to alleviate it.

Mr. M. M. BODKIN (Roscommon, N.) urged the right hon. Gentleman to recognise the necessity for some public works being provided in North Roscommon, stating that the people in the district were willing to contribute largely to the expense of the drainage works in connection with the River Laune. He heard an English Conservative Member the other night declare in the House that in Norfolk on middling land reductions of rent to the extent of 40 to 60 per cent. were given, while on poor land no rent at all was paid. If this were suggested as to Ireland they would be accused of confiscation. In Ireland on this poor class of land only 20 pee cent. reduction was given, although thr tenants made all the improvements.

Several Irish Members rising along with

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. J. Morley); the right hon. Gentleman said: I am sorry to stand in the way of my hon. Friends, but perhaps I may facilitate matters if I state now the steps which the Government have taken in order to meet that condition of things which claims the special intervention of the Government. The Member for Mayo and others have opened up very large issues, but I for one do not complain of those issues being raised or of the suggestion as to the propriety of establishing some great body in Ireland to deal with this ever-recurring and afflicting distress. I was Chief Secretary in 1886, and it was my duty then to make proposals to the House on this subject. Since 1886 there was one very serious failure of the potato crop—the staple food of the people—and I think the Irish Members have done no more than their duty when they remind the House, when one of these demands are made, that there is a great social question with which this Parliament has hitherto shown itself incompetent to deal. I think, however, that the criticism of the Seconder of the Motion really vindicated the Government, and that it will not be necessary to go to a Division on the Amendment. That Amendment expresses regret that the Queen's Speech

> "did not contain a reference to the severe distress existing in some parts of Ireland, and failed to convey an assurance that public works would be undertaken to alleviate such distress."

The Member for Kerry remarked upon that most fairly and conclusively that a better thing than putting a polite sentence in the Queen's Speech was from the very beginning when this distress appeared to the present moment to make prompt and sufficient preparation. I think I may take credit to the Government for having done that very early last autumn. It was quite clear from the information that I received from official sources that the outlook was rather serious. There were some western localities well known to gentlemen from Ireland where the danger was very serious indeed. I directed special examination to be made in all districts where there was the slightest chance of any scarcity or destitution arising. Early in December I called for further and more specific Reports as to the probable duration of any distress which might arise, and as to the resources which the Local Authorities might have. These inquiries were very carefully made under the direction of the Local Government Board. In the middle of December I was convinced that we should have to supplement the resources at the disposal of the Boards of Guardians by some form of Imperial or Government aid. The Secretary for War kindly allowed an officer of engineers to go to Ireland and inspect the districts which were likely to experience something like abnormal distress, and see what measures could be recommended. The end of that operation was about January 3, and the results were immediately placed before me. I found that there was a falling off in the potato crop more or less serious in some 50 unions in the western counties, but, at the same time, immediate gave destitution was threatened in only some 13 unions in Galway, Mayo, and Donegal. Drawing a line from Lough Swilly to Cape Clear, the potato crop was from 20 to 50 per cent. below the average. In some lands the failure was very considerable indeed. I do not quarrel with the Member for Kerry as to his warning me against taking the workhouse test as the test of the degree of the suffering which prevails. I may say if that test were applied—and I say this to the hon. Member for Tyrone, who spoke very fairly and reasonably on this point—the number of recipients for relief would not be greater in these districts than it was in the corresponding period last year. I do not know that I go the full length with the Member for Kerry as to the unsatisfactory nature of this test, but I do agree with him in saying that we cannot take it as a conclusive test by which the Government is to be guided. Though, taking Ireland as a whole, the pressure on the Poor Law Authorities is not greater than in the corresponding period last year, yet it cannot be denied by those who resorted to observation that in certain of the western unions there was a pressure, especially in the matter of outdoor relief, which was increasing. The Member for Kerry cast some doubts upon the trustworthiness of the Reports of the Inspectors. The hon. Member for South Tyrone, too, suggested that, though these gentleman were no doubt experienced men, their very experience made them callous to distress, and so untrustworthy. Well, we all know that constant contact with great distress, with horrible material suffering, does produce a certain callousness.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): I should not like it to go forth that I had pronounced the officers of the Local Government Board as untrustworthy. All I intended to say was this—that their very experience of this distress made them think less of it, and that they had an idea of the endurance of the Irish peasant in their minds which ought not to exist.

MR. J. MORLEY: No doubt the endurance of the Irish peasant is one of the most extraordinary phenomena in nature. I am sure that to-night we are all agreed, in all parts of the House, in recognising the patience and endurance of the Irish peasant and the hardness of his lot. But to return to these gentlemen. My hon. Friend the Member for Kerry spoke of them as irresponsible plenipotentiaries from Dublin.

MR. T. SEXTON (Kerry, N.): I only meant that there was no way of checking what they do.

MR. J. MORLEY: I think there is. These gentlemen do not live in Dublin. They live in their own districts, and their whole life is passed in close contact with those who are administering the Poor Law on the popular authorities, such as they are; and really I do not see how, unless I were to go on a pilgrimage with hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway opposite, which, of course, I should like to do, from whom I am more likely to hear of things as they are on this western seaboard than from these gentlemen. Reviewing, therefore, their Reports, reviewing all the resources of the ordinary Poor Law to cope with the distress, I came to the conclusion that those resources were not adequate, and that we could not rely on the ordinary operation of the Poor Law. I felt also that it would undoubtedly be a hardship on the small landowners, who are precluded from the ordinary means of obtaining relief, if I were to leave the whole condition of affairs to the operation of the Poor Law alone. Serious consequences might follow to those little humble homes referred to by the hon. Member who moved this Motion, which it is to the interest of all to keep up and to preserve from that broken position which, as the hon. Member for Galway pointed out, would necessitate the sale of their little stock and deprive them of the means of living. So the Government felt bound to undertake the responsibility of organising measures for the relief of the people concerned, and that resolution was arrived at long before there was any notion of an Amendment to the Address —in fact, five or six weeks before Parliament was to meet. It was taken in view of the exigencies of the circumstances, and not in fear of Parliamentary pressure. The particular form which commends itself to me after consultation with experts has been found fault with and criticised in this Debate. It is the completion of the repairing and fencing of public roads, on such terms and in such a way as to afford employment to unskilled labourers at a low rate of wages. I admit that when I first approached this question I was not satisfied that the old policy of road-making should again, without any alteration or addition, be applied; and I cast about in other directions for other methods of public works. But if we look at the suggestions that have been made to-night, hon. Members who made them will, I think, feel that the Government were right in not departing from the old lines. My hon. Friend the Member for Kerry said that these are small and trivial undertakings. I admit that that is so, but I will ask my hon. Friend, who may, some day or other, have to deal in his own country, I hope, with these matters, or the hon. Member for Tyrone "What will you do if you do not go in for road-making?" The hon. and gallant Member for Galway said, "Why not have some of the ships built in Ireland?"

COLONEL J. P. NOLAN (Galway, N.): No, I did not. I said, "Why not have drainage?" I spoke about shipbuilding, but I never suggested you should build ships.

MR. J. MORLEY: Well, as to drainage, my hon. and gallant Friend knows very well that the necessity for drainage does not exist in the places where you need to give this relief.

COLONEL NOLAN: In nearly all.

MR. J. MORLEY: I think not. But whether that is so or not, you would have to get the leave of Parliament for such works. You would have to wait weeks and months before you could get your Bill through. I wonder whether my hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland would assist us in getting such a Bill through?

MR. S. STOREY (Sunderland): My right hon. Friend refers to the fact that

I opposed certain works in Ireland. So I did, but only because they were useless works.

Mr. J. MORLEY: Yes, but this is a case of urgency. The inhabitants of this part of the country do not want to leave their homes, and go to all parts of Ireland. Drainage works would not effect the desired object. My hon. Friend the Member for Kerry talked about draining bogs. Well, when I was in Ireland one Board of Guardians sent me a resolution urging me to relieve distress in the form of draining a particular bog; but I pointed out that the effect of that would be that public money would be paid in wages for the improvement of property which did not belong to the public, and all the benefit of which would go to the landlord. Then one hon. Member talked about labourers' cottages, but you require skilled labourers for such work as that, and those labourers to whom we seek to give relief to tide over this period of distress are not skilled labourers in that sense. I have no great prepossession in favour of light railways; and they would not help me in my difficulty. Railway making is skilled work; and much of the money that was paid for the making of light railways in 1890 and 1891 did not go into the pockets of distressed people, but gave employment to skilled workmen in all parts of Ireland. Therefore, for an emergency of a peculiar kind, light railways would not help us. It was suggested that it would be desirable to advance money by way of loan on easy terms to small distressed owners, just as a million was advanced in 1880 to landowners to carry out improvements. I have examined a little, not very profoundly, into what became of that million voted by this House; and I wonder how much of it went to the relief of the distress for which it was intended. And how much would do so if we were to advance money to small holders in their present distress? The present Leader of the Opposition had to consider this question when he was Chief Secretary, and he, as I have found, arrived at the same conclusion as I have done. He has been held up as a model, whom I should do well to follow, for the lavishness with which he scattered money; and he came to the conclusion that it would not be expedient to lend money in times of distress, for the purposes of land improvements, to occupiers of small holdings, who might be expected to carry out those improvements in the years of comparative plenty. It is not the risk of repayment I am thinking of; but I believe that loans would have a demoralising influence upon those unfortunate persons.

Mr. SEXTON: The loans to tenants have been better repaid than those to landlords.

Mr. J. MORLEY: Quite true; I am the last person to disparage the making of loans to tenants; but here you have to deal with the distress of small men living in small holdings and fighting the tremendous battle of life under extraordinary difficulties. I do not think this is the class of men whom the policy of making loans to tenants is calculated to benefit.

Mr. SEXTON: I do not suggest that loans should be made to small holders. I suggested that loans should be made to occupiers, irrespective of class.

Mr. J. MORLEY: My hon. Friend knows a great deal more about these districts than I profess to do; but does he think that loans should be made to small farmers in a condition of chronic distress, deprived of subsistence by the failure of the potato crop, and absolutely in need of subsistence for themselves and their families at the time when these necessary works should come into operation? Besides these general schemes of relief, we have made provision for sudden emergency. What is vital is that no life shall be lost if it can be prevented; and, in addition to the general powers conferred upon relieving officers, we have allowed Local Authorities to grant relief, without restriction, in-door or out-door, in all cases of emergency which may arise. No case of dire want will be left in these districts unprovided for. Care must be taken that relieving officers shall not be left at any moment without funds to deal with any emergency which may arise. I will conclude the account of our projected operations. The areas in which these works are to be instituted are to be determined by persons to be selected by the Local Government Board. We have been able to strengthen the staff by adding three Inspectors to it. They will work in the west in those districts under the supervision of those experienced higher officers who are already familiar with the districts. The general supervision of these measures, both administrative and financial, will be carried out in the Chief Secretary's office. The engineer placed under our directions is now executing works elsewhere, and will advise on future works to be projected. The foremen of the works are to be non-commissioned officers of the Engineers, placed at the disposal of the Irish Government. The timekeepers and paymasters will be the officers of the Royal Irish Constabulary, and that is the only function the Constabulary will have to discharge. The Sappers and Miners, foremen of works, and Royal Constabulary will have nothing to do but keep the time-sheets and see to the pay-sheets. Then we have made an arrangement by which the County Surveyors, with the consent of the Grand Juries, will serve under Major Conder and co-operate with him on the works. The wages of the labourers are to be what they were in 1890—1s. 2d. a day, or 7s. a week. We are anxious that as little money as possible should go in the expenses of administration, and the expenses of administration with respect to each person employed will be about 2s. a week; that is to say, for every man employed in these works 7s. a week will go into his pocket and 2s. a week will be expended in the cost of administration. The number of families in the Unions to whom it is intended to give relief by opening works is 5,400, and we think a very much smaller sum than that mentioned by hon. Members from Ireland will probably be sufficient to meet any demands which may be made upon it. But I do not at present contemplate asking this House for a larger sum than £80,000. If this House were to give half a million of money I am perfectly sure I could undertake, with the assistance of hon. Members from Ireland and the Local Government Board, to spend half a million, or much more, advantageously in Ireland. But that is not my task at the present moment—which is to meet a particular crisis, a crisis whose dimensions I have done the best I can to form an ample judgment upon and to meet in a way which shall prevent one farthing of money finding its way into pockets which Parliament would not desire it should, and which would not leave behind it any demoralising traces or consequences such as have too often followed operations of this kind. Sir, I think I have said enough. On another occasion, when I introduce the Seed Growing Bill, I shall have other things to say, and when the Supplementary Estimate is moved for, for these various operations I shall then be able still more fully to deal with any criticisms, remarks, or suggestions which may be made by gentlemen from Ireland. I hope I have said enough to satisfy them that it is not necessary to press this Amendment to a Division, and that the Government, whatever omissions they have made in the Queen's Speech, have not been at all wanting in promptitude or foresight in dealing with a crisis which we, in common with them, deplore.

*MR. D. CRILLY (Mayo, N.) said, he had listened with mingled feelings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman. He was, however, struck with the keynote of sympathy which ran through it. All who knew the right hon. Gentleman knew well enough that anything he could do personally to alleviate distress in Ireland would be done. But in other respects the speech was of a purely negative kind. When they left the negative and came to the affirmative portions of the speech, what did they find? Conceding to the right hon. Gentleman an earnest desire to alleviate distress in Ireland, what was the sum total of his speech? From the right hon. Gentleman's replies to questions about the distress in Ireland, he had been under the impression that the Chief Secretary had committed himself to two remedies to meet the distress—one, the supply of seed potatoes, and the other, the making of roads. But, so far as he could gather, not a single word had been said in his speech about the supply of seed potatoes.

Mr. J. MORLEY said, he deferred saying more until he introduced his Bill on the subject.

*Mr. D. CRILLY: Well, passing away from that, the right hon. Gentleman committed himself to the making of roads. But he now said he was going to use the Royal Irish Constabulary, the Local Government Board, and the Relieving Officers "to complete the fencing and repair of roads." In his constituency money could be most usefully spent in opening out new roads, and he trusted the right hon. Gentleman, in considering the allocation of the £80,000, would not simply confine it to the completion, fencing and repair of roads. He associated himself with his colleague in the representation of Mayo in protesting that the Local Government Board Inspectors, by going in a secret way through the country without consulting those who really knew the country and its people, could not report to the right hon. Gentleman as to its true condition. The Government were simply intending to spend this money on the reports of inspectors of police, of resident magistrates, and relieving officers. Why should the right hon. Gentleman consult the relieving officer, who was only the servant of the Board of Guardians? Why not consult such men as the priests or the dispensary doctors of the district, who lived amongst the people day by day, and knew most as to their wants. He himself knew of districts which had never been visited by the Local Government Board Inspector since the distress began. How could those districts be relieved? Did the right hon. Gentleman think that this terrible distress was to be met by the appointment of three more Inspectors? It would need more than twenty-three to cope with the terrible amount of distress existing there. But besides the making of roads, and other matters which had been mentioned, his hon. colleague was right in suggesting that some little money might be expended by the Government in drainage, of which various methods existed. A large amount of the country had been reclaimed by the vast sacrifices of the poor labourers and tenants themselves, and if some little assistance could be given to those poor cottier tenants to drain their land, it would be found that there would not always be the necessity for supplying them with seed potatoes, and some return might be looked for by the Government and the tenants from such a mode of assisting them. He had made special inquiry into the subject of seed potatoes, and was prepared to offer some suggestions to the Government, but he would defer those remarks till the Bill was introduced. One suggestion he would, however, make to the Chief Secretary, and that was, that in framing his Bill he should take care to make it impossible for the landlord to step in and seize the crops of potatoes for arrears of rent before the tenant could dig them. This was, in fact, done by the landlords on former occasions. He did not believe that the remedies suggested by the right hon. Gentleman would meet the desperate condition of affairs in Ireland. He agreed with his colleague that it was a humiliating thing for them to have to come to the House and beg periodically for their poor people. The blame for this lay, not with the Irish people, but with the British Government and with the system by which Ireland was governed. He trusted, however, that the right hon. Gentleman would yet have the satisfaction of voting not merely some beggars' dole to the people of Ireland, but that he would have a hand and part in bestowing on Ireland the one measure which would give to the people of Ireland the right of governing themselves for themselves.

MR. J. G. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.) said, the kindly and noble speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary that afternoon must force the conviction on everyone that he was as anxious to alleviate the distress as the men who sat upon the Irish Benches. He wished to direct his attention from the abstract, however, to the concrete, and to give him some few instances of individual distress in districts which had come under his notice. They believed that the Chief Secretary had nailed his colours to the mast in regard to these congested districts. It was he who by constant speeches, and by bringing the matter before the public mind, first of all directed English public attention to the distress of Ireland, who actually enforced the institution of the Congested Districts Board, and who was the prime mover in the works which were instituted by the Member for East Manchester. His right hon. Friend had spoken of the distress as a matter of futurity, but the distress, as he knew, was instant, immediate, and pressing. Past Chief Secretaries had been utterly misled as to the extent of this distress by trusting exclusively to official information. This distress was as old and as hateful as the Union, and he could trace its history for 50 years. The last speech O'Connell ever made in the House was in February, 1847; he was broken in body and in mind, and he burst into tears while asking for food for the people. He was met with the ordinary stereotyped answer that every thing was being carefully watched and considered. Within three months of the great Irish famine of 1846 it was stated from the Treasury Bench that all arrangements were made for meeting the distress, and Lord Stanley, afterwards Lord Derby, the then Irish Secretary, said that all fear of an Irish famine had been the baseless fabric of a dream. He was extremely sorry to say so, but the right hon. Gentleman had the same instruments as had the right hon. Member for East Manchester as to the distress in Ireland in 1890. In October, 1890, the Member for East Manchester stated in a letter sent to the *Times* that the distress in Ireland would be abundantly met by the ordinary provisions of the Poor Law. That was done to counteract two speeches made, at Swinton and St. Helens, by the right hon. Gentleman, the present Chief Secretary himself, in which he described Irish distress, and especially the state of the congested districts in Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman the present Chief Secretary knew at that time better about the condition of the country than the official Chief Secretary for Ireland, because the latter relied only on Local Government Board Inspectors and other Officials, and the former got his information from all who could give it. They wished to penetrate the ring of officials round the right hon. Gentleman. The right hon. Gentleman had not told the House the names of the 13 Unions which were to be included in the area to which he had referred.

MR. J. MORLEY: The Unions are Ballina, Ballinrobe, Bawnboy, Belmullet, Castlebar, Clifden, Galway (West), Glenties, Killala, Milford, Oughterard, Swinford, and Westport.

MR. MACNEILL said that Inver and Arver ought to be included in the list. The workhouse test was absolutely fallacious, for the people in many places would rather die than go into the workhouse. This was proved by the statements of Boards of Guardians and many witnesses. As to outdoor relief, no one could obtain it who owned more than a quarter of an acre of land. That law was passed at the instigation of the landlords for the purpose of driving the people into the workhouse. He had himself visited the distressed districts, from which complaints reached him that the officials were unsympathetic. Local Government Inspectors, he was told, had asked the people whether they were to support them every year, posing apparently as the Executive Government. They also took up the position of advocates of self-reliance, saying—

> "If we did not give you relief for one season you would learn to be self-reliant."

He suggested that the Chief Secretary should do something for the development, on a small scale, of piers and harbours. At the village of Inver, a few miles from Donegal, the potato crop had failed completely, and the inhabitants were depending upon the precarious livelihood which they made by fishing. There was a natural bar outside the Bay near Inver, and the Bay, if deepened, would make a wonderfully good harbour. At present the boats were sometimes kept outside the Bay for three or four hours, waiting for a prosperous tide. Masons and skilled labourers would not be required for the construction of the harbour, for the necessary dredging work could be done by the inhabitants of the place themselves under intelligent guidance. There were fifty or sixty cottages in the village, and compared with them any English gentleman's stables were a palace. When he visited these cottages in many of them there was not a morsel of food. In the bedrooms there were only wisps of straw for the occupants to lie upon. Still, they put a good face on their sufferings, and did not seek to make the most of them, although their poverty and actual want were distressing. To mark how the poor people prized their seed potatoes was pathetic and miserable in the last degree to witness. He could assure the Chief Secretary that he now had an opportunity of greatly benefiting Ireland if he would institute work of the kind he had referred to, and would undertake also to see that the public roads in certain parts of the country were renovated and made serviceable. Thus immediate employment might be given. In the village of Glencolumbkille the parish priest told him that in less than a month 100 out of his 300 parishioners would absolutely be in want of food. He went into the houses of many of these people, and could not find a morsel of food in them. He would point out that the distress was not confined to one particular part of Donegal, or one particular part of the western seaboard. He had visited other districts than those he had already mentioned, and in going through the villages he saw the same woe and distress prevailing in them all. He made inquiries in many of those villages as to whether the local Government Inspector had visited them, and was informed that he had not, so that the activeness of the distress had not been officially reported. Both Protestant and Catholic clergy and local officials had told him that the past year had been one of the worst ever experienced in Ireland, and in going from cottage to cottage in the villages along the coast of Donegal he constantly heard the same deplorable story of suffering and distress. He regretted to say that many of the poor people had the idea that if they had not been Catholic peasants, but Protestant loyalists, they would not have been left to starve as they had been. He, of course, did not lay any stress upon this, but it showed the feeling that existed. He questioned the wisdom of employing the officers of the Royal Irish Constabulary to act as paymasters in the distribution of the seed potatoes, for he thought Constabulary ought not to be employed in this duty, as there was the risk of their coming into collision with the people. The right hon. Gentleman would no doubt admit that it was an unpleasant duty for him to appear, as he then did, in the guise of one supplicating for assistance for the poor in the distressed districts of Ireland. He relied on the statement of the Chief Secretary that there would be no starvation. He was sorry he had occupied so much time, but a Member of Parliament was unworthy of his position who did not endeavour to the utmost of his ability to alleviate the woes and sufferings of his fellow-men. In conclusion, he would only observe that, having regard to bygone transactions between Irish Members and former Chief Secretaries, there was not a true-hearted Irishman who did not regard the presence of the right hon. Gentleman on the Treasury Bench with very great delight.

Mr. W. H. K. REDMOND (Clare, E.) asked whether the Chief Secretary would not reconsider his decision not to do anything in the shape of instituting relief works in the County of Clare. The right hon. Gentleman knew very well that in various Unions in the country resolutions had been passed by the Guardians calling on the Government to do something in face of the distress likely to occur consequent on the failure of the potato crop.

Mr. J. MORLEY, interposing, stated that in his speech he did not speak of any intention not to do anything, but only that at present the Irish Government were confining their attention to the 13 Unions he had named.

Mr. W. H. K. REDMOND was glad the right hon. Gentleman had not definitely made up his mind to do nothing in Clare, but he was thinking, not of the right hon. Gentleman's speech that night, but of his answer to a question on the subject the other day. In face of the resolutions alluded to, the right hon. Gentleman could not feel surprised that he should feel it necessary to call particular attention to the distress in various portions of Clare.

Mr. J. MORLEY: Yes; but I must point out that the distress will come in different Unions at different times. My information is that in the Kilrush Union it will be some time between the end of March and the beginning of July.

Mr. W. H. K. REDMOND said, that if the right hon. Gentleman was prepared to consider the situation again, that was all that was required. In the Kildysart Union the Inspector had reported that the potato crop had failed by one-half. It would be a mistake to imagine that there was no likelihood of acute distress in various parts of the county. Whether distress existed acutely now or whether it was more likely to come on in March, there were various portions of County Clare where the condition of the people was very serious, owing to the failure of the potato crop. He thought, however, that the right hon. Gentleman would now see the necessity of doing something to meet that distress. He agreed that it was a most humiliating thing for an Irish Member to have to come to that House and appear to beg; but in asking the Chief Secretary to spend some money on this head he did not feel one bit like a beggar. And why? Because last year the House imposed additional taxation to the extent of £300,000 a year upon Ireland, not one penny of which, as far as he knew, would be spent in that country. If they were to pay this additional sum, a large portion of which was to be used for giving employment in the dockyards of England, he failed to see why the Irish Members should be called beggars when they claimed that some portion of the money should be used for the purpose of meeting the distressed condition of their own people. He thought the Chief Secretary was making a great mistake in thinking that the sum of £80,000 would, after deducting the cost of administration, be at all adequate for the purpose of dealing with the distress now existing in all quarters of Ireland. If the right hon. Gentleman confined himself to that amount, he would find, before long, that he would be compelled to come to the House again and ask for additional money. He would ask the Chief Secretary to reconsider his determination with regard to this very limited sum, and to make ample provision for completing the work of relief. He did not know whether the hon. and gallant Member for Galway intended to divide upon the matter or not. [Colonel Nolan: Certainly.] If he did, then he should feel ihimself compelled to vote with the hon. and gallant Gentleman, for the reason that he considered the sum which the Chief Secretary had named, to be altogether inadequate. The right hon. Gentleman might, perhaps, be inclined to discount somewhat what he (Mr. Redmond) said, because he voted against him the other night, but he would ask him to take the opinion of any Irish Member, even from among his most enthusiastic supporters, as to whether this sum of £80,000, after deducting the costs incidental to administration, would be sufficient to bring relief to the distressed portions of Ireland. He did not think there was an Irish Member who would say that that was a sufficient sum. He, therefore, asked the right hon. Gentleman to reconsider the question of the amount of the relief. In conclusion he hoped the Chief

Secretary would not forget he had warned him with regard to the serious condition of certain parts of Clare. If the distress became acute there, it would not be his fault but the right hon. Gentleman's.

Mr. S. STOREY (Sunderland): Right hon. Members from Ireland might be quite content as to the amount of the expenditure. He never knew an instance yet in which a sum voted for such a purpose as was now contemplated was not exceeded. He had been long enough in the House to witness many deplorable spectacles of representatives of a nation coming to a House, the majority of which consisted of representatives of other nations, and, like mendicants, begging for what was really their own. An hon. Member opposite had said he felt pained to do it. He (Mr. Storey) was always pained to hear his Friends doing it; but he supposed that until the Imperial Parliament gave the Irish people the capacity and means of managing these things for themselves, hon. Members must submit to witness, and the English people must submit to read of, such spectacles again and again. He did not object to the proposed expenditure. Knowing, as he did, how much England exacted from Ireland, or rather how much more the United Kingdom, for he was anxious to bring in Scotland, enacted from Ireland than she ought, under any righteous arrangement, to take, he was not prepared to object to the small expenditure which was now proposed. He had objected in times past to expenditure in Ireland, and the Chief Secretary had rather twitted him for it. But he had never objected to expenditure there that he thought wise and prudent, and he was quite prepared to admit that, under the special circumstances of the case, the expenditure it was now contemplated to make was a painful necessity laid upon the Chief Secretary and the Government. As an English Member however, he wished the right hon. Gentleman and the Members of the Government to think of the object lesson they were teaching to the English and the Scotch. As he understood the proposal, £80,000—probably a much larger sum—of public money was to be expended in making roads in Ireland, and in giving loans to small holders.

Mr. J. MORLEY: That is just what I said I would not do. I distinctly said I agreed with the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Balfour) that that was a demoralising form of relief.

Mr. STOREY was very glad to hear that explanation. The right hon. Gentleman was going by-and-bye to provide a sum with which to provide seed potatoes. [Colonel Nolan: No, no.] He was going to give indoor and out-door relief to any person, able-bodied or otherwise, so that no person should be left who was in absolute want.

Mr. J. MORLEY: I am not going to give it. I am going to allow Boards of Guardians to give it.

Mr. STOREY thought that was only a quibble. The right hon. Gentleman intended to take public money, so that no person who was in absolute want should be unprovided for. He made no objection to the proposals of the Government, but wished to point the moral to the House of Commons and especially to the Conservative Party. It was urged in support of this expenditure that Ireland was a poor country and that England was a rich country. All he had got to say to that was that "rich" and "poor" as applied to countries were terms difficult to explain. A country might be rich and yet contain an enormous quantity of poor; and he had no hesitation in saying that to-night there were in London more poor people and more wretchedly poor people than there were in the whole of Ireland. Again, take his own constituency. He was sorry to say that amongst his constituents those in absolute want could be numbered by thousands. The working classes had not been able for months passed, in any of the great industrial centres, to earn more than nine, or ten, or eleven shillings a week. [Mr. T. W. Russell: Regular wages," and "*hear, hear*" from the Nationalist Members.] Yes, but the Irish poor lived in country districts, and not in towns where everything was dear. That made all the difference. He was sure his hon. Friends from Ireland understood that. And for weeks past those working-men had not been able to do a hand-stir, and they were now in misery. In the County of Essex there was also great poverty and destitution. An hon. Member who represented part of Essex had told him that all the industries of

Essex were going to wreck and ruin, and even the oysters, against whose credit never a word had been said before, were now suffering depression because it was said they produced typhoid fever. But what he wanted to impress upon the Government was that by adopting those methods in Ireland, for the reasons which they had advanced, they were furnishing an object lesson to the people of England, and they and their successors would find it very difficult to refuse to apply the same policy to this country. That was one of the disadvantages which accrued to Great Britain for not allowing the Irish to manage their own affairs. The Irish had obstructed Parliament, and so compelled the adoption of the Closure; and they had managed in their own way to destroy chances for obtaining reforms which the people of great Britain urgently needed. They had now compelled Ministers to adopt a financial policy which, if it were not applied to England also, would cause immense annoyance and disgust amongst the poor of England; and if it were applied to England would involve the State, as a State, in an enormous expenditure, the end of which no man could foresee.

MR. J. GILHOOLY (Cork County, W.) said there were portions of his constituency, lying along the seaboard of Cork, in which there prevailed destitution as acute as the destitution in any part of the West of Ireland. If the money to relieve this distress was to come out of the Local Rates and not out of Imperial Funds many of the people who would have to contribute the rates would be as poor as the people for whose relief they were intended. That, he thought, was a curious expedient for relieving destitution.

MR. L. P. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.) asked the Chief Secretary to state by what means he expected the poor unions to provide funds for meeting the distress when their cheques were dishonoured at the bank. There were other unions and districts besides those on the western coast enumerated by the Chief Secretary, which were just as much in need of relief; and he hoped that the right hon. Gentleman would reconsider the area of relief proposed as well as the amount of the loan. It had always been found in the past that the official classes tried to minimise the distress, as in the Autumn of 1879 the Duke of Marlborough and Mr. James Lowther proclaimed that there was no such thing as distress in Ireland. Yet within a month after those declarations relief funds had to be raised. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would again examine the information which he had been furnished with. Ample provision should be made for giving employment next summer, and in good time, as he feared that the distress would become acute before the harvest began.

*MR. T. D. SULLIVAN (Donegal, W.) said, that he shared the feeling expressed by the hon. Member for East Mayo that it was disagreeable and painful to have to come year after year before the House of Commons and make these appeals for the relief of distress. But for this state of things no shame or blame attached to the Irish Members or to the Irish people. They had not been allowed to put a hand to the control, direction, or management of their own affairs, and if, 95 years after the Act of Union, the state of a great part of Ireland was what it had been represented to be that night, the blame and the shame rested upon the English Government, with whom rested the responsibility. England was a rich country because it had had the care of a Native Government. Ireland was a poor country because the knowledge and sympathy of a Native Government had not been devoted to her affairs. The hon. Member for Sunderland (Mr. Storey) said that there were poor also in Great Britain, and that the precedent which the Government were making now would be brought against them in respect of those poor. As an Irish Member he could only say—and he expressed the views of his colleagues—was that he had great sympathy with the poor in Great Britain; and if the Irish Members could do anything to help in the bettering of their condition by legislation they could rely on the hearty and thorough co-operation of every Irish Member. Did the Chief Secretary mean the relief works to be confined to the making and repairing of roads? That was a very good work. It had this advantage, that it could be set about almost immediately. A memorial was forwarded by him within the past few days to the Local

GovernmentBoard in Ireland, asking them to make a mile and a half of new road at Dunfanaghy in the County of Donegal, in order to connect two roads. Within the last 24 hours he had received from the Congested Districts Board in Dublin a reply to the effect that they had no funds with which to make the new road. No doubt this was a perfectly good reason; but, under the scheme sketched by the Chief Secretary, that work, and others of a similar kind, might be carried out with advantage to the people of the district. Again, on the western coast of Donegal an immense benefit would be conferred on the people by the repairing, extending, and creating of new piers. He knew of many small piers which were now inadequate and insufficient, and which might be made very useful to the people if further extended. There was a pier on this coast which was almost useless, because outside were two rocks practically debarring vessels of any size whatever from coming within shelter of the pier at certain stages of the tide. By a little expenditure of money those obstacles could be removed, thereby improving the position of the fishermen and others in the locality. Was such necessary work as this outside the scope of the right hon. Gentleman's scheme? On the whole he thought that the Chief Secretary had handled this subject in a sympathetic spirit. The scheme in his judgment would be a useful one, and it would work well. He thought, however, that the grant of money was put at a rather low figure; and he suggested that as the House was in a generous mood it would not quarrel with a Minister who proposed a somewhat more liberal grant for the completion and carrying out of useful and necessary works. He invited the Chief Secretary to have courage in this matter, and he hoped that before it was closed the right hon. Gentleman would reconsider his proposal.

Mr. C. DIAMOND (Monaghan, N.) requested the Chief Secretary to reconsider that part of his scheme which dealt with the interference of the police. He could not help observing that during the evening the representatives of the landlords had been absent from the House.

Mr. J. MORLEY said, he had no right to interfere again, but he should like to be allowed to answer one or two questions, He was asked, "Why confine the work exclusively to roads?" So far as his inquiries had gone that seemed to be the form of work most conducive to the object they desired to pursue; but if in the course of their inquiries they found out other work, this point would be carefully considered. As to the amount of money, he believed that the sum of £80,000 would meet the demands likely to be made upon it. If it was found that the sum was inadequate, it was open to them to come down to the House and ask for more. That would be their imperative duty. It was their business to see this crisis tided over.

The House divided:—Ayes 13; Noes 200.—(Division List, No. 3.)

On the Motion of Mr. Clancy, the Debate on the Address stood adjourned.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT (1894) AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. G. B. Renshaw.*)

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.) objected on the ground that he had not seen the Bill; and he asked the Lord Advocate what he had to say about it?

*The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour, Clackmannan and Kinross) said, the object of the Bill was to remove a doubt which had arisen in connection with a particular word in the Act of last year, and, although he did not share the doubt, it was, in view of the approaching Parish Council elections, of great importance that it should be removed as soon as possible. He therefore hoped the objection of the hon. Member would not be pressed.

Mr. T. M. HEALY said, if he were assured that the Bill contained a clause to prevent the deportation of Irish paupers who had spent their lives in Scotland, he would allow it to be read a second time, but in the absence of that assurance he must persist in his objection,

The Second Reading was accordingly deferred.

House adjourned at Five minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 13th February 1895.

The House met at Ten minutes past Twelve of the clock.

MOTION.

THE UNEMPLOYED.

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. J. Morley, Newcastle-upon-Tyne) : I beg to move the following Resolution, which stands on the Paper in the name of my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House :—

"That a Select Committee be appointed to consider and report as to—(*a*) The extent to which distress, arising from want of employment, prevails; (*b*) the powers at present possessed by Local Authorities in relation to such cases; and (*c*) any steps which may be taken, whether by changes in legislation or administration, to deal with the evils arising therefrom."

*Mr. J. KEIR HARDIE (West Ham) rose to move the first of two Amendments standing in his name, which was to insert after the word "Authorities" in sub-section (*b*) the words "or Departments of State." He said he anticipated the Government would be able to accept the Amendment, which would not in any way interfere with the inquiry, but sought only to widen its scope.

Mr. J. MORLEY : There is no objection on the part of the Government to the substance of the Amendment moved; but the expression "Departments of State" is one not of a usual character and not very definite; and therefore we would suggest that the hon. Member, instead of inserting the words proposed, should qualify the word Authorities, by placing before it the words "Local or Central." To that Amendment the Government will make no objection.

Mr. KEIR HARDIE : I presume the word "Central" means national?

Mr. J. MORLEY : Yes.

The insertion in the Amendment of the words "Local or Central" was then agreed to.

*Mr. KEIR HARDIE then moved the following addition :—

"To make an interim Report to the House on or before Monday, 25th February, on what steps should be taken either by Parliament or by Central or Local Authorities to meet the distress this winter."

He said that this Amendment was not without precedent. On at least two occasions, the House on appointing a Committee, had given instructions for the Report to be submitted by a given date. One of the cases was an inquiry relating to a Bill dealing with the municipal affairs of Belfast, and the other was the case of the Manchester Ship Canal Bill. In both cases the House instructed the Committee to make a Report within a few days of its appointment. He did not ask that the Committee should submit its final Report by a given date. He quite admitted that there was a good deal in the scope of the reference which would necessarily entail extensive inquiries and the expenditure of some time. But there were one or two points upon which a Committee might be able to report within 24 hours of its appointment. The first of these was, as to the powers possessed by Central or Local Authorities. These, presumably, were all known to the officials of the different Departments; and if the Committee examined an official from each Department and one or two witnesses from specially distressed districts as to the extent of the distress, the Committee would then be in a position to make an interim Report as to the powers possessed by the authorities and to make recommendations for dealing with particular localities. There was this danger in the appointment of the Committee—that Local Authorities who were already at their wits' end, and might be glad of any excuse for taking no further action this winter; and if they were they would be able to point to this Committee and say: "Until it has reported we cannot be expected to do more than we have been doing." It would be admitted that the distress at the present time was of a kind which no hon. Member would desire to see continued or perpetuated; and if anything could be done immediately it ought to be done. That was the object of his Amendment.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. V. HARCOURT, Derby): I entirely sympathise with the object stated by the hon. Member. I have always thought that the Committee would make an interim Report, and that it would make it as early as possible. That is entirely the view, as far as the Government is concerned, of the action of the Committee. Of course there will be two classes of questions for the Committee to consider: one is, as to the action to be taken immediately; and the other is, as to the action to be taken permanently. The hon. Member for West Ham must remember that our object must be to appoint a strong Committee, one of the strongest and most representative Committees that can possibly be obtained in this House. Having done that we ought to place confidence in our Committee; and it would not be a wise thing to appoint a strong and powerful Committee and then to exhibit so much distrust as would be exhibited by fixing a date on which they are to do a particular thing. I cannot but think that the Committee would be anxious to report at the earliest possible time, with the object of relieving the present distress. I would, therefore, strongly urge the hon. Member to consider the object of the Government, which I am sure will be shared on the other side of the House, to nominate Members in whom the House will have full confidence to serve on the Committee, and that it would be unwise not to leave power and direction in the hands of the Committee. In these circumstances I do hope the hon. Member will not press this Amendment.

SIR J. E. GORST (Cambridge University) said, he entirely concurred in the spirit of the remarks made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as well as with the object with which the Amendment was moved. After the pledge given by the Leader of the House that it was the desire and intention of the Government that the Committee should make an early interim Report, all that was desired by the hon. Member for West Ham had been practically attained. As to the terms of reference, the extent to which distress prevailed from the want of employment was a very large question, and concerned not only the Metropolis but also the great centres of industry in Great Britain and Ireland. It was a subject which would tax the power and patience of the Committee in their effort to come to correct conclusions. But as the Chancellor of the Exchequer said, there was another question—namely, the immediate relief of distress. So far as this concerned Ireland there did not appear to be much difficulty last night in coming to a determination as to what immediate steps should be taken; and he did not doubt that Her Majesty's Government, when they came to consider the condition of Great Britain, would be able to find some steps that could be taken immediately to relieve distress in Great Britain. After the pledge given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the hon. Member for West Ham might consider that the object of his Amendment had been attained, and might leave to a strong Committee to make an early Report

MR. J. W. BENN (Tower Hamlets, St. George's) heartily concurred in the Amendment of the hon. Member for West Ham, but thought it came a little too late. Within the last few days a plan had been formed by London Members, and was already before the Local Authorities. With the assurance that this would receive the early consideration of the Committee, which would make a speedy Report, the hon. Member might well withdraw his Amendment.

SIR D. H. MACFARLANE (Argyllshire) said, that whilst the House was considering and discussing the question, people outside were starving, and political economy must be placed on one side to save people from starving. When did the Chancellor of the Exchequer expect the Committee to make a Report?

SIR W. HARCOURT: We are using every possible exertion to get the Committee appointed.

SIR D. H. MACFARLANE: When is it to be appointed?

MR. P. M. THORNTON (Clapham) desired to bear testimony to the terrible distress that prevailed in south-west London. That morning a number of residents had appealed to him to make known what they were suffering.

*MR. KEIR HARDIE said, it appeared to him the Government would have no power or control over the Committee, and to prevent possible accidents, he must press his Amendment, which he hoped the Government would accept, if not in this, in some other form.

*SIR A. K. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) appealed to the hon. Member to consider the practical point suggested by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He hoped there would be an early Report on what could be done to meet prevailing distress, and also discriminate in determining between temporary and permanent causes. We had to deal with urgent suffering, but the prospect of improving trade was not hopeless, as, on the whole, 1894 was a better year than 1893. Permanent distress would have to be relieved on different principles from temporary distress, for permanently it was absolutely necessary not only to relieve, but to restore. The season distress must be dealt with at once, and if they were not to wait for the final Report, but to have an interim Report, the hon. Member for South-west Ham ought to be satisfied.

MR. J. A. M. MACDONALD (Tower Hamlets, Bow) desired to emphasise the need for this Committee to report as soon as possible. He represented one of the most distressed districts in London, and knew the urgency of the case. He proposed to amend the Amendment by providing that the Committee should "make an interim Report at the earliest possible date."

SIR W. HARCOURT said, if it would meet the views of hon. Members and give a further assurance to the public that there was a *bona fide* desire to deal with this question as soon as possible, he would agree to the suggestion of the hon. Member.

The Amendment of Mr. MACDONALD was agreed to.

SIR T. FRY (Darlington) said, that before the subject was finally delegated to a Committee, he should like to mention a subject of the deepest importance—the disfranchisement of those who received relief. Severe as the distress was in London, there was much distress also in the provinces. In his own town, owing to the stoppage of some steel works, 500 men were receiving relief, the larger portion of them working in the stoneyards. These men would have their names struck off the register of voters at the next revision. Two years ago, at Middlesbrough, no fewer than 2,000 were so struck off—through no fault of their own. In Newcastle and Gateshead there were large numbers of men working in the stoneyards owing to temporary difficulties. He hoped the subject of the disfranchisement of men who were obliged to seek relief would have the consideration of the Committee, and that a short Bill would be introduced preventing their disfranchisement.

MR. W. ALLAN (Gateshead) endorsed what had been said by the hon. Baronet. No man in this country should lose his citizenship because of poverty.

SIR W. HARCOURT said, he did not desire that the Committee should be involved in political issues. That House would be the best place to deal with this subject, and he would rather reserve it for the House. He did not like the idea of dictating to the Committee what subjects they should deal with, and suggested that discretion to deal with the disfranchisement of those who received relief should be left to the Committee. At the same time he agreed that men should not be disfranchised because they had accepted relief through being thrown out of employment.

MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) thought the House should bear in mind that when a man was obliged to seek public relief he lost that independence which was expected in a voter. If the Chief Secretary as the "central authority" in Ireland, was able to act, with regard to distress there, without the aid of a Committee, why could not the Central Authorities do the same in England?

MR. CYRIL J. S. DODD (Essex, Maldon) pointed out that persons who received aid from certain local charities were also liable to be disfranchised. His advice on the matter had been sought by several persons seeking relief in his own constituency.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.) stated that, under the Conservative Relief of Distress (Ireland) Act it was provided that no electoral disability should attach to any voter who accepted temporary relief.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO HER MAJESTY'S MOST GRACIOUS SPEECH.

MOTION FOR ADDRESS. ADJOURNED DEBATE.

[Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Main Question, 5 February, see page 15.]

Debate resumed.

Mr. J. J. CLANCY (Dublin County, N.), in rising to move as an Amendment to add the following words,—

> "And we humbly represent to Your Majesty, that the time has come when the cases of all prisoners convicted under the Treason Felony Act who are, and have been for many years, undergoing punishment for offences arising out of insurrectionary movements connected with Ireland, may be advantageously reconsidered."

—said, that he desired, in the first place, to remark, in reference to this and to the Amendment of his hon. Friend the Member for Waterford (Mr. J. Redmond), which was disposed of the other night, that the Chief Secretary, in a manner rather unworthy of his character and reputation, had stated that these two Amendments had been separated because he and the Member for Waterford desired to suit the convenience of the Opposition. There was not the slightest foundation for any statement of that character. More than a week ago, knowing that he would not be in London on the opening day of the Session, he wrote to his hon. Friend the Member for South Roscommon asking him to put this Amendment on the Paper in his (the speaker's) name. This Amendment was drawn by Mr. Parnell himself, and had been moved more than once in the House of Commons. There never was any intention to attach it to any other Amendment, and he desired to say that all statements to the contrary were malicious inventions. If defeated upon the present occasion, they would continue to press this Amendment upon the attention of the House. There was a widespread feeling in Ireland upon this subject. It was impossible to exaggerate that feeling; and the House would appreciate how widespread it was from the fact that all the Nationalist Members intended to support the Amendment on the present, as they had supported it on past, occasions. On every hustings where Nationalist candidates appeared at the last Election the Amnesty question was raised, and resolutions in support of it were passed by numerous public bodies throughout Ireland, while the presence of the Lord Mayor of Dublin yesterday at the Bar of the House indicated how deeply concerned the people of Ireland were at the continued imprisonment of the persons whose case he now pleaded. The Irish Nationalist Members would not be doing their duty if they did not seize every opportunity to express, in that House above all other places, the feeling to which he had referred. This question was brought forward year after year, because they believed that the concession of their demand would be a just and most expedient use of Executive Power; and in the course of the few remarks he was about to make he desired to establish that proposition. He did not intend, upon the present occasion, to enter at all into the guilt or innocence of these prisoners, knowing that all he could say on this head had been said in the House more than once. He would only express, in passing, his own profound conviction that in the case of John Daly, and one or two others, there had been a grave miscarriage of justice, and that these men were the victims of an infamous police plot; while he believed that in other cases grave doubts existed as to the guilt of the prisoners. If the facts since disclosed had been before the jury who tried John Daly, they could not, and they would not, upon their oaths, have convicted him. But he did not now wish to discuss whether these men were or were not rightly convicted. What he desired to press upon the House was, that for the present Government to grant the Amnesty asked for would be only a bare fulfilment of the pledge, virtually made on their behalf before they came into Office. The attitude of the Home Secretary during the past two years was well known; he had sworn hostility to the policy of Amnesty, and the Chief Secretary, on a recent occasion in Dublin, rather followed in the footsteps of his colleague. But that was not the attitude of Members of the present Government before they came into Office in 1892. Seven years ago the Chief Secretary paid a memorable visit to Dublin in company with the Marquess of Ripon; and he attended a great meeting in the Leinster Hall, where he delivered an able and remarkable speech, in the course of which he said—

> "I want to ask a question. The French amnestied the Communards, who were guilty of the most atrocious crimes against their Government. The Americans amnestied the Secessionist rebels, who were guilty of an atrocious crime against their Government. Are the only people in the world for whom there is to be no Amnesty, no act of oblivion, the Irishmen, whose only fault has been that they have used their talents for the benefit of their countrymen and done the best they could—and much have they done—to raise up the miserable and oppressed and down-trodden people of their own country? It is not so."

And the Chief Secretary added—

> "We are here to-night—Lord Ripon and I —to assure you that at least one great party is anxious for an Amnesty, for an act of oblivion, on your side and on ours."

He was aware that the Chief Secretary had complained of what he considered the unfair use that had been made of those words; and a few months ago the right hon. Gentleman protested—rather angrily—that, in using those words, he did not intend to include the Amnesty which was now sought. But he (the speaker) had no desire to make an unfair use of the words, and if the Chief Secretary now said that he had not in his mind the prisoners contemplated by the present Amendment he would readily accept the statement of the right hon. Gentleman. But surely the plea of the right hon. Gentleman was an inclusive plea. Surely it included, although it did not specify, the Amnesty now asked. What would be the meaning, what would be the value, of an Amnesty on the side of England which did not include a set of Irishmen who sought to win back the freedom of their country, even though the means they used were means that could not be approved? Could the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary have imagined that even a satisfactory Home Rule measure could produce peace and contentment in Ireland, and bring about oblivion of English oppression in the past, while a number of Irishmen were being kept in penal servitude for offences arising out of movements intended to put an end to that oppression? In August 1892, in the Debate which resulted in the defeat of the late Government, the right hon. Member for Midlothian, in answer to a plea for Amnesty, urged by the hon. Member for Longford, spoke as follows:—

> "In regard to the case of Amnesty, I am sure my hon. Friend will agree with me when I say that it is impossible for those who are not responsible Ministers to give any pledge, or understanding, to deal with criminal cases, either in respect of the revision of sentences or the exercise of the Prerogative of mercy, because that duty can only be properly performed by those who have the full knowledge of the facts, and possess full responsibility. At the same time, I have no difficulty in reminding my hon. Friend that, in every case of criminal conviction, it is the duty of the Secretary of State, at any time when cause may appear, to examine allegations of miscarriage of justice, and not only allegations of miscarriage of justice; but to consider all the circumstances which may point either to the mitigation or the omission of any sentences that may have been imposed. In regard to long sentences, I believe I am stating what is generally known when I say that rules are established for the review at stated periods of these long sentences, in order that questions of mitigation or omission may duly and fully be brought under consideration; and a Home Secretary, to whatever Party he belongs, finds it a necessary part of his duty to go through sentences requiring re-examination."

The words spoken by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian before he assumed Office did not, he admitted, contain an express promise of Amnesty, but they were regarded by the supporters and admirers of the right hon. Gentleman as containing a virtual promise of Amnesty. It was believed that, on the accession to Office of the right hon. Gentleman, Amnesty would follow as a matter of course. To suppose that the right hon. Gentleman did not intend them to be so regarded would be to suppose him guilty of conduct in his public capacity which he did not like to characterise, but which no man could approve. If he meant what he expressed after he assumed Office — implacable hostility to the principle of Amnesty—it would have been only honest and straightforward to have said so. It was not until the Government got into Office that, in the words of the Member for Longford, they shut the prison door with a bang. He claimed an Amnesty on the ground that it was promised virtually and substantially by the Members of the present Government before they came into Office, and they were bound, as honourable men, to fulfil their promise. He urged the acceptance of this Amendment on the House in the second place on the ground that the prisoners to whom he had referred, even if they were all rightly convicted, had suffered enough. He certainly thought that the sentences were unjustly severe ; it was notorious that they were tried under circumstances of panic and anger, which precluded impartiality in the consideration of their cases, and the atmosphere of anti-Irish prejudice which invaded England entered the Courts of Justice. With one exception these men were sentenced to penal servitude for life, and it was worth noting how it was possible to sentence them to such a term of imprisonment. If these men had been tried under the Explosives Act they could not have received such sentences, as that Act set a limit to the number of years of imprisonment. But in order to punish these men with the utmost severity possible, and to mark, as it were, England's vengeance upon Ireland—although their crime was the possession of bombs and explosives, they were not tried under the Explosives Acts, but under the Treason Felony Act. That incident, he thought, was a most important one, as indicating the intention with which these prosecutions were conducted. He asked the House, as a further proof of this intention, to contrast the punishment given to men of other nationalities accused of the same crime as that laid to the charge of John Daly and his companions. He referred them to the well-known cases tried at Walsall. Here were a set of men, some of them English, some foreigners, but none of them Irish, who were accused of precisely the same offence—namely, the possession of bombs—and the maximum sentence inflicted was ten years' penal servitude, some getting seven and others five years. Could even the Home Secretary get up and defend the disparity of these sentences? If John Daly had been a Walsall anarchist he would have been out of gaol two years ago. Yet the Home Secretary had kept him in gaol two or three years beyond the time at which he would have been released had he been a Walsall anarchist, and he said he would keep him in gaol for the term of his natural life.

THE HOME SECRETARY (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.) : I never said so.

MR. CLANCY said, that was the first intimation of hope he had received from the right hon. Gentleman. He invited him to state why he was maintaining the disparity between the cases of John Daly and his companions and the case of the Walsall men. He thought the right hon. Gentleman's answer in a previous Debate was, that the Judge who tried these cases considered all these matters on their merits, and that he would not disturb the decision of the Judge. But the right hon. Gentleman was invested with the Royal Prerogative in order to go outside the findings of a jury and the decisions of the Judges, where it was expedient, as it was in this case. He pressed this Amendment in the third place because these men were political prisoners. When a Motion of this kind was first introduced into the House there was, no doubt, a general disposition not to regard these men as political prisoners ; but as time went on feeling and opinion changed on the point, and last Session even the Home Secretary himself seemed rather to regard them as political prisoners. England had not hesitated to protect and shelter foreigners charged with conspiracy abroad—even men who had taken part in murderous plots. There was the famous case of Simon Bernard, who, in 1858, was tried in England for being an accessory before the fact to the murder of one of the attendants of the Emperor of the French.

The Times of April 19, 1858, described this man as a Republican, a supporter and organiser of revolutionary movements, and a suborner of revolutionary agents; stated that he engaged a needy Italian to enter into his schemes, and that the very implements of death which accomplished the murders of the 14th of January, 1858, were supplied by this man Simon Bernard. And how did *The Times* describe the finding of the jury? It declared that the resolute stubbornness of the English middle classes sternly refused to look on Bernard as a common murderer; that, though the evidence might be against him, it saw in him only an opponent to a despotic ruler, and that he was not to be classed with the common murderer. When the verdict was returned in Bernard's case the audience burst into a cheer, and the newspapers stated that only a feeble effort was made to suppress the demonstration. After the Judges left the bench, Dr. Bernard addressed the jury, and, after admitting his part in the conspiracy, congratulated them on having vindicated liberty and crushed tyranny. Moreover, the jury who acquitted Bernard in face of the evidence, were afterwards actually banqueted in the City. In face of those facts he declared that it was rank hypocrisy for men, whoever they were, to pretend to be shocked by the crimes of the prisoners for whom he pleaded, while they would approve the shelter and protection of foreigners guilty of offences like those with which Bernard was charged. Finally, he pressed for an Amnesty on the ground that it would be an act of the highest expediency. To grant it would be consistent with the policy of the Government to Ireland in particular and with good policy in general. The policy of the Government towards Ireland was, by their own account, one of conciliation. Did the Home Secretary or the Chief Secretary think that that policy could be served by the infliction of ten years' penal servitude on foreigners and penal servitude for life on Irishmen for precisely the same class of offence? The history of the relations between England and Ireland showed that it would be contrary to good policy in general to keep those Irish prisoners in gaol. He had heard that it was intended this Session to set up a statue of Oliver Cromwell in some part of that building. To Englishmen Cromwell might appear to be a great historical figure, but to Irishmen he appeared to be a monster of cruelty. His name in Ireland was a synonym for robbery and massacre, but he was only one of a thousand agents of the English power in Ireland whose footsteps have been traced in blood to satiate the vengeance of England. And what had England gained by their deeds of rapine and murder? She had gained the Irish difficulty, which had been with her for centuries, and would remain with her until the policy of vengeance was finally abandoned. On the other hand, the policy of conciliation, whenever it had had been pursued, had been productive of good results. It would have a similar effect to an even greater extent if it were applied in the present case. Ireland was now in a state of unexampled peace. The conspiracies for which the men referred to were suffering were things of the past; and he thought the Home Secretary might well look forward a little, take courage, and say that to mark the present satisfactory change in the condition of things in Ireland, he would, on the ground of expediency, free those men from prison. The demand he made was certainly not of an extraordinary character. Amnesties to political offenders of all kinds and degrees had been granted from time to time in every civilised country. The Chief Secretary on one occasion mentioned in a speech at Dublin the case of the French Communards. Now, even if he were to admit that the Irish prisoners were rightly convicted, he could not for a moment admit that their guilt was equal to that of the Communards of Paris, who not only committed murder and set fire to the capital of their country, but did so when the common enemy was at the gates. Nevertheless the Communards were amnested, for the French Government had the sense to see that an act of appeasement was, after a time, the best policy to pursue. Was the Government of Great Britain alone, among the civilised Governments of the world, capable of considering vengeance as true statesmanship? He hoped not, and, confident that his hope was well-founded, he submitted his Amendment to the judgment of the House.

Mr. ASQUITH: The question raised by this Amendment has been so frequently considered by this House, and the views of the Government upon it have been so recently expressed with such undoubted emphasis by my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland, that I trust I shall not be accused of disparaging the importance of the subject if I content myself with making a brief reply to the speech of the hon. Member. The hon. Member made both an able and temperate speech. I could wish, however, that he had spared us some of his insinuations as to the motives which have actuated the Government in dealing with this question. To represent us as influenced in this matter by considerations of personal dignity or personal ambition—to present the question as viewed by us as one of political expediency, of the loss or gain of so many Votes, is not to act fairly or justly to those who have charge of a very grave and responsible duty. Speaking for myself and my colleagues, I say that we have given long and painful attention to this question, and that we have endeavoured throughout to divest our minds of considerations of that kind. The conclusions we have come to, whether they be right or wrong, have been affected by no other motive than the desire to do strict and impartial justice. The hon. Member has gone over ground with which we are necessarily familiar and over a large part of that ground—as I have on more than one occasion expressed my own views on this subject—I shall not follow him. But there are two points on which I must say a few words. In the first place the hon. Member has alleged that the Government have violated the pledges on the faith of which they obtained the support of many constituencies at the General Election, and in particular the Votes of Irish Members after that election. In as far as the charge of the hon. Member was based upon a speech made by my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary, I have to observe that my right hon. Friend's speech was imperfectly, or rather inadequately, quoted by the hon. Member. With respect to this ground of charge I am content to refer to the public answer given recently by my right hon. Friend to a deputation from the Corporation of Dublin. Then the hon. Member thought it politic to refer in support of his charge to a speech made by the most illustrious Member of this House—I refer to the passage which he quoted from the speech delivered by the right hon. Member for Midlothian on August 9, 1892. I will not read that passage again, but I will remind the House that the passage begins with the explicit declaration that it is impossible for those who are not responsible Ministers to give any pledge with regard to the mode of dealing with criminal cases, either in respect of the revision of sentences or in respect of the exercise of the prerogative of mercy, because such duties can only be performed by those who have a full knowledge of the circumstances of such cases. I am at a loss to understand by what process of logic the hon. Member translates that refusal to give any pledge, that clear declaration that people who are not Ministers are incapable of giving a pledge. into a promise such as he alleges was given. No; my right hon. Friend laid down the precedure which, if he came into office, his Government would take, procedure which, in the spirit and the letter, has been followed by myself and my colleagues in connection with this question. We have, as my right hon. Friend said we would, carefully examined every allegation of miscarriage of justice. I have given the most careful attention to the cases to which attention has been drawn to-day, and I am satisfied in my own mind that the convictions were just and proper. The hon. Member has referred to the jurors in these cases as having acted under the influence of panic, bnt I can find myself no indication whatever that the jurors were swayed by any influence of that kind. In the case of Daly I am perfectly satisfied that the verdict was perfectly just. My right hon. friend, the Member for Midlothian, in the speech to which I have referred, alluded to the practice at the Home Office of bringing long sentences under periodical review. Well, this practice has been followed in these cases, and my own view is, that the time has not come, having regard to the gravity of the crime and the nature of the sentences, when it would be possible for any Minister, acting on settled principles, to advise Her Majesty to exercise the prerogative of mercy. The hon. Member has referred to the disparity between these sentences and other sentences passed by English Judges in similar cases. This, I do not hesitate to say, is, in my opinion, a very relevant matter for consideration. It is impossible to equalize sentences—I wish it were possible. Something, however, may be done; and I trust that, as far as the Home Office is concerned, something is done from time to time to reduce the disparity between the treatment of one case and the treatment of another, when there is a similarity between them. But I must point out that when the hon. Member says that if Daly and others had been indicted under the Explosive Substances Act of 1883, they must have received much shorter sentences, he is not stating the case quite correctly, for under the Explosive Substances Act a person found, as Daly was, in possession of explosive substances with intent, may be sentenced to imprisonment for 20 years. The hon. Member has referred to the case of the Walsall Anarchists, who were indicted under the Explosives Substances Act, and has contrasted the sentences passed upon them with Daly's sentence. Well, the Walsall Anarchists were tried by the same Judge who tried and sentenced Daly—namely, Mr. Justice Hawkins. He had in his mind, as I know, when he sentenced the Walsall Anarchists, the proceedings at the trial of, and the sentence passed upon, Daly, and he came to the conclusion that the difference which he made between the sentences fairly corresponded to the relative guilt of the persons concerned. I have examined the cases of the Walsall Anarchists myself, and I am not prepared to dissent from the opinion of Mr. Justice Hawkins. The circumstances of the two cases are very dissimilar, and I cannot understand any Judge regarding the same measure of punishment as adequate in the case of Daly and in that of the Walsall prisoners. The hon. Member says that we are lenient in our treatment of foreign Anarchists, and points to the cases of Farnara and Polti. Well, the latter, who was only a subordinate agent, was sentenced to ten years' penal servitude, and the former to 20 years' penal servitude, the *maximum* sentence that could be imposed under the Explosive Substances Act. (Several HOME RULE MEMBERS: "That proves our case.") I feel bound to say that 10 years, either with regard to the practice which prevailed or the particular circumstances of the case, would have been inadequate to the offence. The House is asked to assert that the time has now come to deal with these cases. As the Member for Midlothian said in the Debate in 1892, these cases come up for periodical review at stated intervals. Persons sentenced to long terms have their cases considered at the end of 10 years, and then at the end of 15 years. And I may remind the House that no person is kept in penal servitude in this country for more than 20 years under any circumstances.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Then, if they got 20 years, 15 ought to be enough.

MR. ASQUITH: I am represented as being strongly and implacably the opponent of Amnesty. I decline to treat these cases as standing on any exceptional footing. I have not treated them with any exceptional leniency, and it is equally untrue to say that I have treated them with exceptional severity. I am treating them in the same way in which other cases are treated which come before the Home Office. I do not believe there is a man more averse to cruelty or unnecessary punishment than I am, and the statement so often quoted or misquoted in this House I make now: So far as I am concerned, so long as I have the honour to exercise this most painful and responsible duty, I shall treat these cases in that spirit. I have said no more, and I say no less now. When they come up for review in the ordinary course of time I shall consider the facts of each particular case, the sentence imposed in each case, and the comparative degrees of severity which ought to be measured out. What I say now is, that that time has not yet come. It is a matter of deep regret to me that it is so; but having regard to the interests of justice and the manner in which the criminal law is administered, the atrocious character of the crime—I say nothing about the motives—which would have inflicted untold misery and suffering on hundreds, and perhaps more, of perfectly harmless and innocent people, I cannot, I deeply regret to say, come to the conclusion that the time has arrived when the clemency of the Crown can be properly and rightly extended to these people.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (MR. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): I think this is a convenient moment when I should interpose a personal vindication on one point. I was not in the House, but I have heard that the hon. Member for North Dublin (Mr. Clancy) made a reference to a speech made by me in Dublin. I understand that he did not quote the whole of the extract; but, whether he did or not, I think it fair to the House that it should have the whole of the passage read. I feel more bound to read the passage because I see in front of me the Member for Plymouth (Sir E. Clarke). He went over to Ireland the other day, and in Dublin he made a speech; and in that speech he said that I, in the Leinster Hall, had used language which no sensible man could interpret otherwise than as a reference to the dynamite prisoners.

SIR E. CLARKE (Plymouth): What I said was, that Mr. John Morley had used language which no sensible man who read it could help regarding as a promise that the dynamiters would be amnestied as the Communists had been amnestied.

MR. J. MORLEY: Exactly. I will ask the House to listen to the passage on which my hon and learned Friend founded that observation. Sir, this was my language at the Leinster Hall:—

"I know very well that language has sometimes been used by the trusted Leaders of the Irish people of a kind which it would be difficult to defend. I have deplored it. I shall always deplore it. I think that many of these honourable gentlemen themselves amongst friends would regret it too. But I want to ask a question. The French amnestied the Communards, who were guilty of the most atrocious crimes against their Government; the Americans amnestied the Secessionist rebels, who were guilty of an atrocious crime against their Government—are the only people in the world for whom there is no Amnesty, no Act of Oblivion, to be Irishmen, whose only fault has been that they have used their talents for the benefit of their countrymen and done the best they could, and much have they done, to raise up the miserable and oppressed and down-trodden people of their own country? Gentlemen, it is not so. That is no longer, in spite of what eminent men may say, the mind nor the intention of the people of Great Britain. We are here to-night, Lord Ripon and I, to assure you that at least one great Party is anxious for an Amnesty and an Act of Oblivion, on your side and on ours both."

Sir, there is not one single word which any sensible man, any honest man, can interpret as referring to the dynamiters. I make enormous allowance for Irishmen, who have strong and deep feelings about the Amnesty of these political prisoners, but that allowance cannot be made for an English lawyer of great reputation stating that the only interpretation to be placed on these words is that they referred to the dynamiters, and these were the men of whom I was thinking. In the General Election of 1892 a deputation who sympathise with the Member for Waterford waited on me, and what did I say?—

"You ask me whether I will aid the movement for the release of the men now undergoing penal servitude for the dynamite conspiracy some ten years ago. I recognise the temperate spirit in which you argue the case, and I note your straightforward declaration that you and your friends have no palliation for dynamite, and that you regard it as the detestable resort of political lunacy. I regret that I cannot agree with you in thinking it of vital importance that the question should be raised now. The 'detestable resort of political lunacy,' as you truly call it, is a mode of warfare not only barbarous in itself and deserving of severe punishment, but it is also most inimical to the strenuous efforts that we are at this moment making to bring the old system of Irish government completely to an end. When we have succeeded in these efforts, then will be the time to consider whether the British Government would not be well advised, as incident to that momentous settlement of international accounts, to show the same spirit of clemency towards these prisoners as was shown, for example, by the Government of the French Republic towards the exiled Communists. Such, at least, is my judgment, and I beg you to convey it to your friends."

I do not say that I am right or wrong, but I do say that, to allege that I uttered one word which could be interpreted as meaning that I was in favour of releasing these men, was a most extraordinary misrepresentation.

DR. J. E. KENNY (Dublin, College Green) said, he was glad the Chief Secretary had intervened in the Debate, though he had, since the right hon. Gentleman made his explanation of the words he used at the Leinster Hall meeting, accepted the explanation that the meaning he now assigned to the words was that which he intended they should bear. But the right hon. Gentleman rather made it a point against Irish Members that they did interpret the words in the way they had done. He (Dr. Kenny) was at the Leinster Hall meeting. There were probably 5,000 persons present—certainly over 4,000—and the right hon. Gentleman's words were universally interpreted at that meeting in the sense in which Irish Members had interpreted them ever since. If he and those with whom he was closely associated had, in putting a certain interpretation upon the words, sinned, they had sinned in what the right hon. Gentleman must consider good company. There was not a single Member of the Irish Party—and then there was but one United Irish Party—who did not, until the right hon. Gentleman's interpretation at Newcastle, interpret the words as meaning that, on the return of a Liberal Government to power, the Amnesty of political offenders was assured. He challenged any of the Irish Members who now supported the Government, to say he had not accurately interpreted the feeling created in Ireland, whether that feeling was justified or not. It was well to bear in mind that the composition of the Leinster Hall meeting was rather heterogeneous. There was a large infusion of the true Nationalist element, but there was also a very large element of expectant lawyers and of neo-Nationalists, whose consciences had been aroused by what they were given to suppose were Irish wrongs, and by a sense of favours that were likely to come soon—favours that had been enjoyed since by some of the gentlemen who were at the meeting. The gentleman who now so worthily discharged the functions of Attorney General for Ireland, was at the meeting, and probably the Chief Secretary's words were of the character that would suit gentlemen of that type. The Chief Secretary now said that no sensible man could interpret his words as suggested. The right hon. Gentleman must know quite well that every one of the Irish Members (the anti-Parnellites) who sat below him, took the words as meaning that, in the event of the Liberal Party coming to power, there was an Amnesty for political offenders. They never dreamt the right hon. Gentlemen referred to themselves. They did not consider themselves political offenders, but, if they were regarded as such, they—or at any rate those Members for whom he could speak—gloried in their offence. He, personally, did not want any amnesty, and thought the right hon. Gentleman paid them but a sorry compliment if he imagined they demanded amnesty. His conscience was quite sufficient amnesty for him for anything he had done or should do. He was quite satisfied he and his friends had done no wrong in the interpretation they had put upon the Chief Secretary's words. The right hon. Gentleman and his Government gained some advantage by that interpretation, and in justice he ought to consider the necessity of fulfilling, not what he said he promised in fact, but the expectation he aroused in the Irish mind. He congratulated the Home Secretary on the altered tone of his reply, as compared with the *non-possumus* attitude he took up on the first occasion the question of Amnesty was debated in the House; and if the Debate had no other result but the admission—the tardy admission—of the right hon. Gentleman, it would still have been important and valuable. The right hon. Gentleman had said that if John Daly had been tried under the Explosives Act, for having explosives in his possession, he could not have received a greater punishment than 20 years' penal servitude, and that therefore it was only fair that Daly's sentence should be regarded as one of 20 years, and not as one of penal servitude for life. That, of course, meant that in three years Daly's sentence would come up for consideration. But what about the other eleven men who had got life sentences? Only three of these had explosives in their possession, and they also, like Daly, should be considered as having got only 20 years' penal servitude. The other eight, if tried under the Explosives Act, could only have got 14 years; and, as that term had already expired, he called upon the right hon. Gentleman, in view of his own reading of Daly's sentence, to liberate those men now. The right hon. Gentleman had also made another important admission. He admitted that the Walsall anarchists had been dealt with on a totally different and more favourable basis than the Irish prisoners. And yet it could not be asserted that the Walsall prisoners were less guilty than the Irish prisoners. On the Walsall prisoners was found a document showing explicitly how explosions were to be created in theatres, just like the explosion in the theatre at Barcelona by which dozens of innocent people met awful deaths at a moment when they were most enjoying life. Was guilt associated with a desire to free one's country, in which there was nothing of the personal element, comparable—would even the right hon. Gentleman have the audacity to compare it for one moment—with the crime of men who would have caused explosions in theatres? The Irishmen had centuries of wrongs to their country to avenge; and though they took the most reprehensible of methods to avenge those wrongs, the allegations that their acts were to be compared with the acts of anarchists would come badly from a Government that was going to wipe out some of the wrongs which England had done to Ireland. Why, if Ireland tried to wipe out the crimes which England had committed in Ireland she would remain at the task till the crack of doom! He did not dream that it would have been necessary in the course of the Debate to insist that the offences of those Irishmen were political offences. Supposing Daly had escaped to France or to America, and that the English Government had demanded his extradition, would they have got it? They knew very well they would not, even though they sent an army to Paris or to New York. And yet the hon. and learned Member for North Louth called those men dynamitards! He defied the hon. Member to get on a platform in Ireland and call them dynamitards. Those men were not dynamitards in the sense in which the word was used. They had been led away by sentiments which in their origin were noble, but which, under the influence of English injustice to Ireland, had got warped and distorted till they were given criminal expression. The hon. Member for Louth was not present in the House, for he always met an attack by running away from it; but when he said that time had given the lie to every statement made by the late Mr. Parnell, he should have remembered that there was at least one thing that had not got the lie, and that was Mr. Parnell's description of the character of the hon. Gentleman. He would refer the hon. Gentleman to his own colleagues. Let him ask them what they thought of his character, and he would find that it tallied in every respect with the character given of him by Mr. Parnell. But to return to Daly's case, he utterly repudiated the idea that the prisoner was guilty of the crime of which he had been convicted. Daly, so far as the charge of having explosives in his possession was concerned, was the victim of an Irish police plot. A man named O'Neill was the *agent provocateur* of the Irish police in that case. He disappeared after the trial; but the Home Secretary must know where he was, and could not the right hon. Gentleman—now that there was no danger to O'Neill—enter into an inquiry in order to ascertain whether the assertion of Mr. Farndale, the chief of the Birmingham police, that Daly was the victim of an Irish police plot was not well founded? No doubt the right hon. Gentleman, in refusing to liberate the prisoners, was only concerned with justice. But the friends of the right hon. Gentleman—his supporters in Ireland—had asserted over and over again that the Parnellites, by their inopportune action in taking up the question of Amnesty, were really keeping John Daly and his companions in prison. That assertion was not very complimentary to the Home Secretary, ut he asked the right bhon. Gentleman, in justice to the Parnellites, against whom this charge was being constantly made, to give it his denial. He could tell the Home Secretary that, if he were in earnest in supporting a salutary policy for Ireland, he would do an act of justice by releasing those prisoners, which would be accepted in Ireland as an act of conciliation, and would be far more valuable to his Party than all the promises of the Government which they were utterly powerless to fulfil.

*MR. C. H. HOPWOOD (Lancashire, S.E., Middleton) said, that he was not intending to examine into the facts concerning the cases which had been referred to; but he wished in general and broad terms to support the prayer which had been urged upon the Government. For the last 20 years he had had more to do, probably, than any Member of the House with bringing cases before the attention of the Secretary of State; and he was satisfied that each of the successive Ministers of State had applied themselves to those cases according to the recognised system—it was only against the system that he was going to say a word—and that they had feelings of mercy as strong as any of those who had been disposed to arraign their conduct. He had voted for amnesty before; and he felt that he should be wrong if he did not take this opportunity of explaining his vote. The system under which Home Secretaries acted came down from an older time, poisoned with its severity; and it was, perhaps, impossible for any Minister, suddenly placed in office, to make an improvement of his own. To a very large extent he had to follow the precedents; but he had found one or two Ministers who were out of the way merciful, and who had extended mercy not exactly on the lines he was now reprobating. A great deal was said about having all sentences equal. That was impossible. One crime was as unlike another of the same name as one man's face was unlike another's. It was necessary to consider the motive and the manner in which the crime was perpetrated. The pressure of want, and a hundred such considerations, must weigh in the mind of the Judge who tried the criminal. Therefore he despised and objected to that uniformity of sentence which was called for; but that desire for uniformity was a part of the system. In the present case there were a number of men suffering long years of penal servitude. Did any Minister realise what a year of penal servitude meant? It was a year of torture, and two years of penal servitude doubled that torture, for there was no such thing as becoming accustomed to the suffering, and wearing the chain more lightly. The convicts were shut almost from the light of day, and had their food administered according to the ideas of some scientist, who prescribed so many ounces of bread and meat each week. They could only hear from their relatives at long intervals, and sometimes the capricious jealousy of a gaoler shut them off altogether. If society had tried to invent some diabolical addition to the torture of penal servitude, it could not have devised anything more cruel than to keep the convict from communication with his friends, when perhaps he was longing to know the fate of wife or child stricken with illness. It was said that by special application to the Home Office leave could be obtained to receive communications; but that privilege was walled in by official regulations, and while one man might obtain it another could not. Penal servitude was an atrocious punishment, which ought not to be resorted to except for the greatest crimes, and even then the term of it ought to be moderated. The object of punishment was variously regarded as a deterrent, as a requital, and, if it were long enough, as a means of saving society from further mischief by the criminal. Those were merely buzzing about the fringe of this matter who supposed that the effect of severe and savage punishment was to deter. It would not prevent passion, or the exaggerated love of country which led men to regard themselves victims in the cause of their country. As to the theory of requital, would any one in these days stand up for vengeance as a justifiable reason for atrocious punishment? It was so under an older dispensation, but now the administrators of the law had softer hearts. The idea of softening the heart in these questions would cause some people to scoff; but the idea had been steadily gaining ground all through the century. At each point, however, the difficulty was to overcome official and public timidity. The public were ready enough to hear the claims of mercy, until every now and then some crime put them in terror for themselves, and then they raised an outcry so fierce that the Minister of the day must take account of it.

He was not concerned to defend the brutality of Cromwell or of his time. Deeds of ferocity were done on both sides. In this age he simply claimed that we had advanced, and that mercy, without speaking of it as being laudable in itself, was much more efficacious in the reduction of crime than any other principle. He was quite sure that the Home Secretary was perfectly accurate when he said that he had addressed himself to this question with regret for the suffering involved. Nobody in the House would doubt that statement. What was needed was to create, if they could, a public opinion; and then they would be enabled to argue the question with the public as hon. Members could do among themselves in the House. What was the good of keeping these men in prison? What was the good of daily increasing a form of suffering and misery that was equal to sending a warder into their cells to deal them blows, if such a reproach to humanity were possible? Again, he said that it was the best tactics to observe mercy. A man, say, was placed in gaol for a number of years for having committed a political or semi-political offence. What happened? His friends and compatriots belonging to the country in whose interest the crime was committed—and which he did not wish to minimise in any way—cherished feelings of resentment and revenge as they looked on the sufferings of the man in prison. What good, therefore, were the Government doing by keeping these men in prison? Were there not a hundred or a thousand examples of the good effected by letting such prisoners free? A chaplain had described penal servitude in terms like these: he said it broke down every fibre of good in a man; it destroyed the will and the power of the mind; it made a man a plastic tool in the hands of others; it was a misery to himself in his social relations and to others by the weakening brought upon him as a moral and responsible agent. He must therefore, with all the force he could command, ask the House to join in the prayer which had been uttered on behalf of these prisoners, and to knock at the door until some of them, at least, were released. If the rigid, stern idea of punishment were departed from, he imagined that there would be an avoidance of the mischief which was stimulated by a sense of vengeance on behalf of such prisoners. There would be a requital in that direction at least to the Government—a requital which would in point of security fully make up for the miserable advantage of keeping ten or a dozen despairing men in a life of torture.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) wished to ask the Chief Secretary a question with reference to the speech which he delivered in Dublin in 1888. An extract from that speech had been read, and the right hon. Gentleman had disowned, in the most explicit manner, any idea that he had in his mind at the time he made that speech the prisoners now undergoing penal servitude. He accepted the right hon. Gentleman's statement as to the meaning of the speech without demur; but he was bound to say that, being in Dublin at the time, and having carefully read the right hon. Gentleman's speech, he, as well as the whole of Irish opinion, entertained the belief that the speech had reference to the Amnesty prisoners alone. Now they knew that this was a mistaken belief; and he thought the refutation of the right hon. Gentleman would be complete if he would tell the House what were the class of offenders he had in his mind whom he proposed to amnesty.

MR. M. AUSTIN (Limerick, W.) said that a feeling of intense interest existed among the Irish people with reference to the Amnesty question. He thought it was a notable feature of the Home Secretary's speech that the right hon. Gentleman had abandoned the reply of "Never" which he uttered last year. He gathered from the speech of the right hon. Gentleman that there was a faint hope in the distant future for the political prisoners; and he imagined that a Government which declared itself to be so anxious to redress the wrongs of Ireland would recognise that the Amnesty question was one with regard to which certainly the Prerogative of mercy should be extended. He asked why it was that the Irish political prisoners were tried under the Treason Felony Act, while other prisoners, for a precisely similar offence, were tried under the Explosives Act? Were the Irish Members to accept the reply of the Home Secretary as the final word on the question, and the one which was to be transmitted to the people of Ireland?

*MR. D. CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.) did not think the Mover had taken the best means to obtain a favourable consideration of his case from the Government. The hon. Member laid the greatest stress on the argument that these prisoners were detained in prison in defiance of pledges that they should be released. That argument was demonstrably untrue. The whole tenour of the words of the right hon. Member for Midlothian was to refuse any pledge or understanding on the subject; while those of the Chief Secretary were incompatible with the notion of any pledge having been given. Still, all that did not preclude the Home Secretary from giving an early and favourable consideration to all that could be said in behalf of the prisoners. It had been said that the severity of the sentences must be explained by the fact that they were passed in a panic; but it was by no means uncommon when a particular kind of offence became rife and dangerous, for the offence to be punished for a time with exceptional severity. That was illustrated by the crime of garrotting, which became a sort of epidemic in 1860, and was therefore punished by very long terms of penal servitude, but being now comparatively rare was not punished with anything like the same severity. If the state of Ireland were now much more peaceful, that was a fair and strong circumstance to be taken into consideration, now that the necessity for exceptional severity had passed. The Home Secretary declined to look upon these offences as political, and declared that he must look at the inherent guilt of each case. In that principle he largely agreed, and had repeatedly said so to his constituents. As a sincere friend of Ireland, he might be allowed to say to his Friends on the Irish Benches, that it would be a very dark day for Ireland if it were believed that responsible men in Ireland had any sympathy with the commission of crime. That belief had prevailed. He was bound to say that at times there had been a certain amount of ground for it. The suspicion that there might be some sympathy with the commission of real crime weakened the voice of the Irish Members and weakened the hands of the Ministers when questions of this kind came up. In his opinion the crime of the dynamiter was worse than that of the assassin, because it aimed a blow, not at a single person, but it might have wrought bloody destruction to hundreds and even thousands; and when his hon. Friend (Mr. Hopwood) talked of the sufferings of these prisoners, he must think at the same time of the sufferings of those who were the victims. At the same time he was not prepared to say that the plea that the crimes were political was entirely without foundation. The Authorities of that day elected to try the men for treason-felony; whereas they might have tried them, under the Explosives Act. The very name imprinted a political character upon their offence. They might have been tried at Common Law for attempting to commit murder. But, however that might be, to be tried for treason-felony instead of under the Explosives Act made a material difference in the punishment inflicted. Twelve years was a long time, and when one took into consideration these two points—first, that the sentences were pronounced at a period when this particular kind of crime was epidemic, and, therefore, was not unnaturally visited by severe punishment, and that the men were prosecuted under an Act which imparted a political complexion to their offence—he hoped the hour had nearly arrived when a revision of the sentences might take place and the prerogative of mercy be exercised.

MR. J. F. X. O'BRIEN (Mayo, S.) said that it was not too strong an expression to describe the sufferings these men were undergoing in prison as the torments of the damned. Theirs was a living death. He could speak with some experience on this point, and he knew that the ordinary convicts were treated by the warders as old friends and chums; in fact the ordinary convict looked upon the prison as his home. He knew of a man who had been in penal servitude for seven years, and who was back in prison within three weeks. He had been out and enjoyed himself for three weeks, and he considered himself well off to have had those three weeks. It was quite a different thing in the case of these Irish political prisoners. Warders were specially selected for them who would be certain to have no sympathy whatever with them, and he knew how they nagged at, persecuted, and worried those poor men, for no reason whatever. It was inevitable that these men, who were undergoing a life sentence, must be broken down in health. It was idle for the Home Secretary to pretend to say that the offences for which these men had been convicted could not be considered political offences. The very fact that they were tried for treason-felony got rid of that contention. It was evident also that they were tried for treason-felony for the purpose of inflicting on them extraordinary sentences. Although the Anarchists had committed acts of a similar kind, the sentences inflicted on them had been much shorter. In his opinion, so far from it being right to treat these Irish prisoners with greater severity, they were distinctly entitled to very much more leniency than other offenders; for no one could doubt that they had been driven to their desperate courses by the terrible wrongs their unfortunate country had endured. When it was considered that the Government of France had amnestied the Communards, how could the Government of this country continue its terrible severity against these unfortunate men. The crime of the Communards was committed against their mother country, than which he believed no crime could be greater; but the offences charged against these Irishmen were committed against the oppressors of their mother country, and, therefore, should be treated with very much more leniency. In face of the acknowledged and complete failure of coercion in Ireland, surely it was futile for the Home Secretary to believe that he could gain any good end by keeping these men any longer in prison. He could tell from his own experience the utter futility of attempting to strike terror into the minds of men who were convicted of political offences by means of excessive punishment. In his judgment, the proper way to consider the case was, that since the Government of this country had turned over a new leaf, and was bent on carrying out the humane and just ideas of the late Prime Minister, it was now in a position to deal with these men with kindness and leniency.

Mr. J. CALDWELL (Mid Lanark) said he wished to make a few observations on this case. The first point was that this was a conviction for treason-felony. He had no doubt the Crown were well advised in taking that course, for they had thereby gained the advantage of having the whole history of the connection of these men with the Fenian movement brought into the case, and, in addition, were enabled to get a life sentence which they could not have got under the Explosives Act. What right, then, in fairness, had they now in the question of commutation to turn round and treat these convictions as if they had been obtained under the Explosives Act? He distinctly refused to deal with this case as if it were a question of conviction under the Explosives Act, on the ground that the Government should have taken up the case under the Explosives Act from the first. Suppose this were a case under the Explosives Act, the utmost penalty under that Act was 20 years. That was the maximum, but they were entitled to ask what was the practice of the Courts in administering that Act? In the Walsall case the Judge gave 10 years; in another case 20 years; therefore, taking the average, 15 years would be a fair sentence under the Explosives Act, and if these men had been convicted under that Act, under the practice by which tickets-of-leave were granted, their sentences would now probably have been worked out. Even supposing that these men were to be treated with the utmost severity on the ground that their offences had in them some motive connected with Ireland, they were not detained on that ground. They were detained only on the ground of their use of explosives, and the Home Secretary did not attempt to justify their sentences on that ground. The result of all the admitted facts was that these prisoners were suffering under sentences that were unjustly severe. Taking the case as it had been presented by the Home Secretary, for 12 years these men had been punished under sentences for life, without any hope of revision, when their proper sentences would have been 20 years. Was it not time to consider the commutation of the sentences, seeing that the men had been so long subjected to the torture implied in the hopelessness of a life sentence. Another point was that undoubtedly the sentences were passed at a time of considerable panic. It would be a mistake for the Crown to refuse to exercise clemency in the case of sentences passed under such circumstances. A Judge naturally considered what was going on at the time, and he gave a more severe sentence than he otherwise would for the purpose of deterring others from the commission of the particular crime it was desired to repress. It was an important fact that this class of crime had now ceased, and therefore the clemency of the Crown should come in to recognise the altered condition of things. In the public interest they ought to encourage Judges not to withhold their hand, knowing that if they gave heavy sentences the Crown could step in when an altered condition of things would justify it in so doing. Within the last year or two Judges had come to the conclusion that, in the past, sentences of penal servitude had been too long, and there had been a growth of feeling in favour of reduced sentences; and why should not that feeling operate now with regard to these sentences passed 10 or 12 years ago? No one could suppose it was necessary in the public interests to keep these men in prison. Another special reason for exercising clemency was that an amnesty would have been the accompaniment of Home Rule. That had been passed by this House, and there was no reason why amnesty should be delayed by the action of the House of Lords. This House had passed Home Rule as far as it could do so; and why should they allow these men to linger in gaol merely because the question of Home Rule was at issue between this House and the other? Why should these men be the victims of a contention between the two Houses as to which one of the Houses said that the contention might go on for many years? This House had adopted the principle of Home Rule; and there could not be a more fitting occasion than the present, when they were voting an address to a Speech which stated that crime had decreased in Ireland, to decree an amnesty. It would signalise the point reached in the better relation of the two countries to grant an amnesty which was desired by the majority of the people of Ireland. Even the hon. Member for South Tyrone did not attempt to say a word against it.

MR. T. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour) said, that all sections of the Irish nation would thank the last speaker for the kindly speech he had just delivered. It was to be regretted that it had not been heard by the Home Secretary, who, he hoped, would read it and take to heart the sentiments the hon. Member had so nobly endeavoured to impress upon the House. The blot in the Home Secretary's speech was that he ignored the condition of Ireland and the feeling in Ireland upon this subject. Notwithstanding the right hon. Gentleman's admission that these men were tried as political offenders, notwithstanding the sympathy he expressed, he insisted upon adhering to a hard and fast rule, and only considering these cases at some interval laid down by red tape for the cases of ordinary criminals. There was no doubt the sentences were inflicted as cumulative sentences to cover the two offences of the possession of dynamite and taking part in a treasonable conspiracy. No one could doubt that this was done by the Judge with the view of striking terror into the minds of all who were likely to commit these outrages. It was idle to contend that there was not a panic at the time. Why, the present Chancellor of the Exchequer passed the Explosives Bill through three stages in that House in one night. Now, when all that panic was passed, and the outrages had ceased, and the Queen's Speech contained congratulations on the diminution of crime, to refuse to consider these sentences, and the circumstances under which they were passed, was to convert them into sentences of vengeance. When it was a question with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian whether he would or would not be supported by the Irish Members, a question was addressed directly to him by the hon. Member for North Longford (Mr. Justin M'Carthy), who commanded 70 votes, and no one could deny that the impression produced by the answer in the mind of every Irish Member was that, if he came into power, he would throw a ray of light into the cells of the prisons. The answer was so interpreted by every newspaper; and it was idle to endeavour to go back and to attempt to deny the effect of the language used. By the Chief Secretary's words the hope was conveyed to the Irish people and was entertained by them during all the time they fought for the Liberal Party to get and keep them in power that Amnesty would be extended to these prisoners, and that there would be oblivion and forgetfulness as regarded the past between the two countries. The Chief Secretary quoted the words to his Newcastle constituents:—

> "If the Home Rule Bill were passed into law, if the Irish people had conferred upon them the right of self-government, he, for one, would be a party to advocating Amnesty to these political prisoners."

He submitted that these words amply justified the interpretation that had been put upon them. The Home Secretary persisted in regarding these political prisoners as ordinary criminals. They were not tried as such, and the circumstances of the time showed they were not regarded as such. But, even in the case of ordinary criminals, did he pay no regard to expressions of public—in this case of national—sympathy on their behalf? Interest in these political prisoners was not confined to one section of the Nationalist representatives in the House, or to the Nationalist representatives at all. It was not confined to any one class or political party in Ireland. There was a general consensus of opinion that if the Government was wise and wanted to grapple with the Irish difficulty and consolidate Irish feeling, these miserable men should no longer be kept in bondage as an exhibition of national vengeance on the part of England towards Ireland.

SIR E. CLARKE (Plymouth): The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland has made an attack upon me in respect of a sentence contained in a speech which I delivered a little while ago in Dublin, and I am anxious to at once answer that attack. In that speech I was referring to the expectations which had been entertained by the Nationalist Party of changes and measures that were to come to pass in the event of the present Government coming into power. I mentioned, as one, the expectation that the "political prisoners," as I call them, were to be Amnestied.

> "Mr. John Morley," I said, "used language which no sensible man, understanding the meaning of words, ever read or ever could read except as a promise that the dynamite prisoners would be Amnestied as the Communards had been in France."

That observation was not founded on a single speech. I know the course of events with regard to this matter, and that an important statement was made which was principally in my mind when I made that observation. In 1888 the Marquess of Ripon and the right hon. Gentleman took part in a great demonstration in Dublin, which followed, and was intended to counteract, the visit of two Unionist leaders to that city. On that occasion the right hon. Gentleman was expounding the policy of the Liberal Party in antagonism and contradiction to the policy then being pursued by the Government. In the course of his speech he used the passage which has been once read this afternoon, and which I may be allowed to read again, for there may be Members here now who were not here when the attack upon me was made. The right hon. Gentleman said:—

> I know very well that language has sometimes been used by the trusted leaders of the Irish people of a kind which it would be difficult to defend. I have deplored it—I always shall

deplore it. I think that many of these hon. Gentlemen themselves amongst friends would regret it too. But I want to ask a question. The French amnestied the Communards who were guilty of the most atrocious crimes against their Government. The Americans amnestied the Secessionist rebels who were guilty of an atrocious crime against their Government. Are the only people in the world for whom there is to be no amnesty, no act of oblivion, to be Irishmen?—whose only fault has been that they have used their talents for the benefit of their countrymen and done the best they could—and much has been done—to raise up the miserable and oppressed and down-trodden people of their own country. Gentlemen, it is not so—that is no longer, in spite of what eminent men may say, the mind or the intention of the people of Great Britain. We are here to-night, Lord Ripon and I, to assure you that at last one great Party is anxious for an Amnesty and an act of oblivion on your side and on ours both."

Now, the right hon. Gentleman says it may be gathered from that passage which I have now read that he was referring not to the dynamite prisoners, but to those whom he described as the trusted leaders of the Irish people. [MR. J. MORLEY: "Hear, hear."] I am glad to have his acquiescence that he was speaking of those whom he described as the trusted leaders of the Irish people, and inasmuch as he was saying they had used their talents for the benefit of their country, the use of that phrase excludes the idea that he was referring to anyone who had been guilty of crime. [MR. MORLEY nodded assent.] I accept that as an honest statement. But to whom was he referring? Was he referring to the then Leader of the Nationalist Party, the hon. Member for Cork, or was he referring to two, three, or four Gentlemen sitting in this House who have been recognised as prominent men in the Nationalist movement in Ireland? Was it with regard to them he was asking the people to pass an Act of oblivion and amnesty? He scorns the suggestion. Those men, the trusted leaders of the Irish people, as he described them, would never have come to ask for amnesty and oblivion. They were always claiming that the words they had spoken, so far from being blotted out, should ever be kept in remembrance. He was not speaking of them; but if he was, with what conceivable tactlessness was it that he managed to get into the same sentence an allusion to the Communards?

MR. J. MORLEY: The hon. and learned Member is able to appreciate an *a fortiori* argument, and I argued that if the French amnestied the Communards and the Americans the Secessionists, *a fortiori* we might overlook the cases of certain men in Ireland.

SIR E. CLARKE: I hope I can appreciate and fairly measure the *a fortiori* argument which the right hon. Gentleman says he was then using. But to whom was he addressing that speech? It was not addressed to those who understand the niceties of *a fortiori* arguments. He knew perfectly well that when he spoke of atrocious crimes having been committed by the Communards who had been amnestied by the Government of France, those whom alone he recognised as having been guilty of any crime at all were the persons who had been charged with dynamite conspiracies. If that speech stood alone, I should have accepted at once the declaration of the right hon. Gentleman. But the sequence of events is a curious and interesting one. That speech was made in 1888. I believe from 1888 until 1892 those sentences were quoted largely in Ireland, and were accepted—[*Ministerial cries of* "No"]—oh yes they were—and accepted, erroneously, if you like, as representing the attitude which the right hon. Gentleman was going to take with regard to the dynamite prisoners. If that was an erroneous acceptation I am not aware that it was ever contradicted. I am not aware that during the four years that followed 1888 the right hon. Gentleman ever spoke in any other sense or explained publicly the distinction he now draws with regard to those words. Time passed on, and we come to June, 1892, when an election was pending, and in the beginning of the month Mr. Laverty, the Secretary of the Newcastle Branch of the Irish National League, wrote to the right hon. Gentleman and asked him specifically what he would do in the case of the dynamite prisoners. The right hon. Gentleman wrote back and said he was coming to Newcastle in a few days. and would take an opportunity, in addressing his constituents, of dealing with the matter. He did not follow that course, but dealt with it in a letter written by him. Instead, however, of dealing with so delicate a matter on a public platform, he dealt with it in a letter which he addressed to Mr. Laverty, and which contained specific reference to those dynamite prisoners. Now let us see what the letter said.

MR. J. MORLEY: I have already read it.

SIR E. CLARKE: I am sure the right hon. Gentleman will not grudge me the opportunity of reading it again. It was dated June 25th, 1892, and read asfollows: -

> "You ask me whether I will aid the movement for the release of the men now undergoing penal servitude for the dynamite conspiracy some ten years ago. I recognise the temperate spirit in which you argue the case, and I note your straightforward declaration that you and your friends have no palliation for dynamite, and that you regard it as the detestable resort of political lunacy. I regret that I cannot agree with you in thinking it of vital importance that the question should be raised now. The 'detestable resort of political lunacy,' as you truly call it, is a mode of warfare not only barbarous in itself, and deserving of severe punishment, but it is also most sinimical to the trenuous efforts that we are at this moment making to bring the old system of Irish Government to an end. When we have succeeded in these efforts, then will be the time to consider whether the British Government would be well advised, as incident to that momentous settlement of international accounts, to show the same spirit of clemency towards these prisoners as was shown, for example, by the Government of the French Republic towards the exiled Communists."

Here is precisely the same illustration that was used at the Leinster Hall in 1888, and is now being used again on the eve of the General Election in 1892, in reference to the case of these dynamite prisoners. What was understood by this letter? "We are making strenuous efforts to bring the whole system of Irish government to an end." What did that mean? It meant we are making strenuous efforts to get into power, and by the use of the authority which will then be ours to alter the old system of Irish government, and then the amnesty question will be considered. The right hon. Gentleman did not say "When we have carried Home Rule we will see to this matter." Has he or has he not altered the system of government in Ireland? I think he claims to have altered it.

MR. J. MORLEY: I have not been able to produce an Irish Legislature or an Irish Executive.

SIR E. CLARKE: Where is the reference to Irish Legislature or Irish Executive in the letter? I do not believe that the right hon. Gentleman will tell me that, when he wrote this letter, he only intended that this matter of Amnesty should be discussed when an Irish Parliament should be sitting in Dublin.

MR. J. MORLEY: It was clear on the face of that letter, and it was distinctly my intention, that when we had brought to an end the strenuous efforts for Home Rule which were then being made, the Amnesty question might be properly considered by us.

SIR E. CLARKE: I would ask, of what value would that letter have been then? The men who read that letter put upon it the interpretation that, when the right hon. Gentleman said "We are making strenuous efforts to bring the old system of Irish government to an end," he was referring to the coming into power of his Party. By the lips of Lord Ripon and himself he had previously—in 1888 that is—made the pronouncement of their policy in regard to Amnesty.

MR. J. MORLEY: So far were the Gentlemen who read that letter of mine from putting upon it the construction which the hon. and learned Member suggests, that they passed a resolution deploring the announcement that I had just made and intimated their approval of the conduct of my colleague in the candidature, and expressed regret at the callous tone of my letter.

SIR E. CLARKE: If the right hon. Gentleman has by him the words of that Resolution he will find that it contained an intimation that those who passed it would vote for the right hon. Gentleman. A phrase which the right hon. Gentleman has used has removed the impression left upon my mind as to one passage in the letter. But where was this interpretation put upon it, and when was it put upon it? The discussion which brought this matter back into prominence took place only last year, when a deputation waited upon the right hon.

Gentleman and when he gave them a long answer, in the course of which he said :—

> "The charge of breaking pledges has been levelled with great particularity and circumstantiality against me. Now, one of the first qualifications for an Irish Secretary, is that he should be patient and long-suffering. I have been two and a half years in Ireland listening to that charge. I have been in no hurry in answering that charge."

[MR. J. MORLEY : "Hear, hear !"] The interpretation which I put forward has been entertained widely, not only in Ireland, but in this country ; and is it to be wondered at that there should have been a sense of painful surprise on the part of those who had supported the right hon. Gentleman, when they found that this great act of Amnesty was to be postponed—I suppose until the House of Lords has been overthrown, and Home Rule has once more come back into the region of practical politics ? I had no desire to put upon the words of the right hon. Gentleman a meaning which they could not properly bear. I said at Dublin, and I now repeat, that no sensible man would read that speech of 1888, and the letter of the right hon. Gentleman in 1892, except as conveying a promise that the dynamite prisoners would be amnestied, as the Communists had been amnestied in France ; and I submit that interpretation with confidence to the judgment of those who hear me, and of those who may read my words outside this House.

MR. H. J. WILSON (York, W.R., Holmfirth) said, he saw no reason why he should change his opinions. They had listened to three speeches from legal Gentlemen capable of explaining and understanding these matters, and pressing on the Government the reconsideration of the question. Were they to go on year after year having this question continually raised without any concession being made ? A grave doubt existed as to the guilt or innocence of at least some of these men ; but, whether they were guilty or not, the time had come when their case should be reconsidered. He had no hesitation in voting, as he had done before, in favour of the Amendment.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.) : We have often been told that the curse of Ireland, and of Irish government, is that it is made the sport of Parties. We have never had a more forcible illustration of this than we have just seen in the speech of the hon. and learned Member for Plymouth. We have been appealed to by some to turn the present Government out because it has refused to release these prisoners, and we have heard from two or three hon. and learned Gentlemen of the Conservative Party that, if they came into Office, this question would not be favourably considered. The taunt of the hon. and learned Member for Plymouth to the Government is, that they, at some time or other—falsely, as is alleged by the Member of the Government charged—did hold out some hope of forgiveness being extended to these prisoners. The Tory Party taunt the Liberal Party with showing the smallest symptom of recognition that their case should be reconsidered and the men released. And yet we are asked to replace the Government, who, at one time or another, has shown some desire to exhibit mercy towards these men, by those Gentlemen, one word from whom would do much to turn away their torture. Having listened very often to Tory speeches, I must say that I never saw a more miserable exhibition of Tory rancour and Tory folly than in the speech which has just been delivered by the hon. and learned Member for Plymouth. It does not fall to my lot to defend the language of the Chief Secretary, who is well able to take care of himself ; but the Member for the Harbour Division of Dublin has just admitted that in 1888 no question of Amnesty had been raised. [MR. J. MORLEY : "Hear, hear !"] The first time the case of these men was brought before the House of Commons was during the Leadership of the late Mr. Parnell, in August 1890. Surely, Sir, 1886, when the Liberal Government was in Office, would have been a very proper time to have raised that question, and not after the split in the Irish Party. A few of us raised the question before the split, the only names that occur in "Hansard" as having done so being those of the hon. Member for Kerry (Mr. Sexton), Mr. John O'Connor (who is not now a Member of the House), and myself. What was the question in 1888? The forged letters of the *Times* had been published the year before, and the question had been raised in this House by Sir Charles Lewis of an inquiry into these forgeries, or rather allegations. *Parnellism and Crime* was the standing dish of the Tory Party. The *Times* newspaper was circulating copies of that pamphlet by the hundred thousand; and it was in relation, not to the question of dynamite, but to the Phœnix Park murders that we were being charged, and in relation to the crime and outrage which had existed during the Land League period. The hon. Member for Plymouth passed us this compliment: he said that the audience which he addressed in the Rotunda—the Orangemen of Dublin—could appreciate *a fortiori* arguments. What was the audience in the Leinster Hall? It consisted of every member of the professional classes in Dublin that sympathised with Home Rule. It was presided over by the Lord Mayor, and was a thoroughly representative gathering. Irishmen, no doubt- have not that intelligence which Providence has allotted as a peculiar possession to the British people, but there are still some small fragments of understanding left to us; and I would advise the hon. Member for Plymouth, if he wants an intelligent audience in Ireland, not to confine himself solely to the Orange Party, because he will find that an audience even of what are called the most illiterate peasants in Kerry, Donegal, and Mayo are quite as intelligent and quite as keen upon political topics and *a fortiori* arguments as the *fine fleur* of the Primrose League of Plymouth. I was sorry to hear some of the remarks which fell from the hon. Member for North-east Lanark, who made a speech different in tone and temper from the speech of the Member for Mid Lanark, which I think deserved the thanks of every Irishman. The hon. Member for North-east Lanark said we ought to be careful, in making motions of this kind, that we do not attract to ourselves the accusation of sympathy with crime. That, to my judgment, is a very feeble argument. Do the people who urge the release of Mrs. Maybrick sympathise with the poisoning of husbands? Let me give another proof of the absence of any kind of sympathy with dynamite crime in Ireland. Yesterday the Corporation of the City of Dublin presented a unanimous Petition in favour of the release of these prisoners; but, when O'Donovan Rossa sought to get some small office in the Dublin Corporation, out of 60 members he did not get six votes. A short time ago one of the released prisoners, Mr. Egan, was looking for a small rate-collectorship in the City of Limerick, and he could not get it, though it was his native city, and the Mayor of Limerick, a prominent Parnellite, was the gentleman who was his successful opponent. If that is the view taken with regard to released prisoners by such bodies as the Corporation of Dublin and the City of Limerick, I can hardly see how it can be said that there is that sympathy with crime in Ireland which has been alleged. The Home Secretary said that it was Mr. Justice Hawkins who had sentenced the Walsall prisoners, Daly and his companions, and Polti and Farnara. I was very curious to see what was Mr. Justice Hawkins's view of a political crime, as it was denied by the Home Secretary that these men were political prisoners, and very happily his views as to what is a political offence are on record. In the Extradition Act of 1870, passed by a Liberal Government, there is this section—

> "A fugitive criminal shall not be surrendered if the offence in respect of which his surrender is demanded is one of a political character."

Accordingly, if the basest crime be committed, even if it were absolute murder, it could be held to be a political crime. In the case of the murder of State Councillor Rossi in the Ticino Canton of Switzerland by Castioni, who was the person who granted a *habeas corpus?* Mr. Justice Hawkins, the Judge who sentenced Daly to penal servitude for life for being caught with a bomb, and sentenced Polti, the Italian, to 10 years' penal servitude for being caught with a much smaller bomb. Mr. Justice Hawkins adopted the definition of political crime given by Judge Stephen in his "History of the Criminal Law," and, in speaking on the case of Castioni, said—

> "I cannot help thinking that everybody knows there are many acts of a political character done without reason—done against all reason; but at the same time one cannot look too hardly, and weigh in golden scales, the acts of men hot in their political excitement. We know that in hot and heated blood men often do things against and contrary to reason; but none the less, an act of this description may be done for the purpose of furthering and in furtherance of a political rising, even though the act may be deplored and lamented as cruel and against all reason by those who reflect upon it afterwards."

Accordingly Mr. Justice Hawkins discharged Mr. Castioni. If it was the view of this Judge and of the law of England—because the Judges were unanimous on the point—that murder committed in a foreign State acquires a different character when it is political, what is to be said of the crimes for which these men have been sentenced? I pass by altogether the consideration of the doubt which exists as to whether some of the prisoners are actually guilty. I take the circumstances of the case alone, and, in my judgment, what the Home Secretary has entirely failed to take note of, in the many speeches he has made in this House on this subject, is the difference in political temperature between 1895 and 1883. Crimes were possible then which are impossible now, and in consequence a wholly different set of considerations arise, and I venture respectfully to say that in none of his speeches has he taken into account the policy which has been carried out by his own Government and by the illustrious statesman who was at its head when passing the Home Rule Bill. The Home Secretary said that he has not ignored the question of the disparity of these crimes, having regard to the magnitude of the Irishmen's offences; but if he will turn to a Report of the Walsall case he will find that one of the prisoners confessed to the Crown that he made the bombs believing they were to be used with a view to operations against the House of Lords, and not long afterwards the terrible explosion in the Barcelona Opera House occurred, in which many people were injured. One of the Walsall prisoners admitted that he believed the bombs were about to be used in a theatre abroad, and we know that within two years a terrible explosion occurred at the Barcelona Opera House, in which 200 people were massacred. And I am bound to admit that it was a remarkable thing that the Home Secretary in his responsible position, and with the international obligations existing between one Government and another, should declare that, in his judgment, the Walsall Anarchists were not too lightly punished. The Irish prisoners and the Walsall prisoners were sentenced by the same Judge—Mr. Justice Hawkins. The Italian prisoners—Polti and Farnara—got, one ten years and the other 20 years. Nobody who knows the reputation and has read of the popularity of Mr. Justice Hawkins in this country will, for a moment, conclude that he was actuated by any racial antipathy in the sentences that he passed. But this I do say, that by the sentence that he awarded for the first time in 1883, when this horrible crime was new, it was right that he should seek to restrain it and that he should inflict a greater punishment then than when the crime, owing to foreign operations, had become of a more familiar character. In Ireland we have a practice, when sentences come up for review, of sending to the Judge who convicted and asking him by direct reference whether, having regard to the time that had passed and the circumstances of the district, the moment had not arrived for some modification of the sentence. I understand no such practice prevails at the Home Office, but may I not ask, are not the circumstances of this case of a sufficiently exceptional character, in view of the disparity of sentences between the Englishmen, the Italians, and the Irishmen, in view of the Debates that have taken place in this House, and in view of the feeling expressed on all sides, and having regard also to the condition of affairs that now exists in Ireland—has not a case arisen in which the Home Secretary may very fairly consult the learned Judge who sentenced these prisoners? I am quite sure that if Mr. Justice Hawkins had his attention called to the fact that the Irishmen have already been 12 years in prison, he would be inclined to think that the time has come when the door of hope might be opened to these men. I have only one more word to say, and it relates to the same point. The right hon. Gentleman said that Farnara had got 20 years, and that the life sentence was only equivalent to 20 years. That is true, but 20 years is not a 20 years' sentence. It is only a 15 years' sentence; and it seems to me that there is a great deal in the argument that under the Explosives Act the Irish prisoners could only receive 15 years. With regard to many of those prisoners, who have been 12 years in custody, some ray of hope would shine upon the bars of their cells if they knew that even at the end of 15 years they would be released. I do not say that I do not strongly hope that their release will occur before that time, but I say that some ray of hope would be given to those men if those Conservative Statesmen who have been so alert to pose in Liberal armour on this occasion would drop a hint that even at the end of 15 years they would take the view that this disparity of sentences should be corrected and that the Irishmen should get the same treatment as the Englishmen and Italians have received. I respectfully say that, although in this matter we have not had the reply from the Government that we should have desired, at the same time, I think this Debate has been a useful one. I think that good is done by bringing matters of this kind fearlessly and candidly before the public. I think that a softening influence sets in as the matter comes to be considered by persons who have not thought of it before, and I hope that after this Debate more tender considerations will arise in the public mind. But the fact remains that Ireland, as is stated in the Queen's Speech, is at the present moment in a condition more peaceful and less criminal than ever it was before, and I certainly think that no more fitting crown could be placed on the policy of Her Majesty's Administration in Ireland than by releasing these Irishmen from prison.

MR. W. H. K. REDMOND (Clare, E.) said that the hon. and learned Member who had just spoken had told the House that this was a useful Debate, from which good results would follow. That was a complete change in the attitude of the hon. and learned Member and his friends in regard to this question, because, some few years ago, when the matter was first brought forward upon the Address, they pointed out that it would not be a service to the political prisoners to discuss their cases in the House. The people of Ireland were told the same thing, but he was glad to see that the hon. and learned Member, together with his friends, had now changed front. The hon. and learned Member told them that he had been one of the first to debate in that House the question of granting Amnesty to the Irish political prisoners; all he could say was, that it was a great pity that he had not made some attempt to debate it in the country as well, because the attitude which the Government had adopted in this matter had no doubt been largely brought about by what they had noticed in Ireland, namely, that the friends of the hon. Member had always refrained from taking part in the amnesty demonstrations. The action they had taken must have led the Home Secretary and the Chief Secretary to the conclusion that the feeling which existed in Ireland upon this matter was not as strong as had been represented. That would be the natural result of the Member for Louth and his friends throwing cold water upon the demonstrations that had been held in Ireland. Nothing, however, was to be gained by comparing the case of these prisoners with that of Mrs. Maybrick or any other of a similar kind. These men were, unquestionably, political prisoners, and the best proof of that was the statement the Chief Secretary made in Newcastle—that when Home Rule for Ireland was obtained would be the proper time to consider their cases. But might he not ask, if it would be proper to consider their cases when Home Rule was carried, why it would not be just and proper to consider them at the present moment? The hon. Member for Louth had defended the Chief Secretary against the charge of inconsistency in respect of his speech in the Leinster Hall. That meeting was, undoubtedly, a representative and an intelligent one, and the people who went to the Leinster Hall in Dublin were always well able to appreciate what was said to them, and they generally remembered the advice they received there. But the hon. Member for Louth was mistaken if he thought that the Amnesty question was not raised at the time that Lord Ripon and the Chief Secretary were at the Leinster Hall. The friends of the prisoners, and especially those of John Daly, were keenly interested in the movement at that time, and the agitation was being carried on in all parts of Ireland, There could be no doubt that the people of Ireland regarded what the Chief Secretary said at the meeting in the Leinster Hall as a promise that amnesty should be granted to the prisoners. It was certainly deplorable that the Chief Secretary did not find himself able to carry out now what the people of Ireland took to be a clear promise that, when a Liberal Government came into power an Amnesty would be granted. It was mere moonshine to hope for conciliation, and for the union of hearts between the two countries, whilst the prison doors were shut upon these men. It was only straightforward to tell Liberals and Tories alike, that Home Rule or no Home Rule, there would be agitation and discontent in Ireland until these men were released. The Home Secretary had referred to the great atrocity of these crimes. He did not defend crime of any kind, but when an English Minister spoke about the atrociousness of crime attempted or committed of any section of Irishmen, he could not help feeling indignant, because nothing had been done or could be done by Irishmen which could at all compare with the atrocities perpetrated in Ireland by successive English Governments. It did not become the lips of the Home Secretary nor of any English Minister, to speak of atrocity in connection with Irishmen. Let the right hon. Gentleman read the history of Ireland, and in its pages he would read the records of atrocious crimes committed by English Governments, in comparison with which everything done by the imprisoned men, or any other Irishmen, sank into insignificance. The Chief Secretary had practically told the House that instead of sentences for life the sentences of these prisoners were to run for 20 years. That declaration was not satisfactory. Even if it were said that the men would be released after 15 years imprisonment he should not be satisfied, because he believed that in two or three more years, possibly in six months, these men would be in their graves unless they were released at once. Penal servitude had broken their health. He would not be a party to any shuffling about this matter, and he told the Home Secretary that if the men were not released the conduct of the Government would be regarded in Ireland as a policy of vengeance against men whose crime was that they had attempted to do something to destroy English rule in Ireland. English Governments had never shown any clemency or mercy to men who had opposed English rule. If these men should die in prison they would, in his opinion, have been foully murdered by the Government. The continued incarceration of the men would show an intention on the part of the Government to compass their death, and to prevent them from ever breathing the air of liberty again. He did not wish to use any language that could be construed into a threat, but he declared that if the men should die in prison a feeling of bitterness would be aroused in Ireland, which would not disappear for a generation at least. The Government must not be misled on this subject of Amnesty by the fact that the majority of the Irish Members had not taken part in the agitation. Let them not be deceived;

the question had taken deep root in Ireland, and the opinions which he had expressed were the opinions of the great majority of the Irish people.

*MR. W. P. BYLES (York, W.R., Shipley) said, that he had always voted for the Amnesty of these prisoners, and that he should do so again. He had understood the Home Secretary to say that if these men had been tried under the Explosive Substances Act, their sentences could not have exceeded 20 years' imprisonment, even those found with explosives upon them, and that when Daly's sentence came up for review it would be reviewed as if it had been a sentence for 20 years instead of a life sentence. He thought that the reasoning of the Home Secretary ought to lead him to the conclusion that the men, the eleven men, who were found without explosives upon them, and whose maximum sentence under the Explosives Act would have been 14 years, were entitled to be released immediately. Why did the Government keep these men in prison? If for their own sake in order that they might reform, was it likely, if they had not reformed after 12 years' imprisonment, that they would reform after any additional period of incarceration? These long sentences were horrible, and cruel, and unintelligible punishments, and it was high time that more humane, and, therefore, probably more effective, methods of punishment were adopted. Did the safety of the State require the continued imprisonment of these men? Was there a man in that House who believed that, if these prisoners were released to-morrow they would ever plot again? He could not think that there was. The times when these things took place had passed away. A better feeling had begun to prevail between England and Ireland. It had been brought about by friendliness and conciliation. He maintained that rebels had been reconciled by the policy which the Liberal Party had espoused towards Ireland, and nothing the Government could do was more likely to extinguish the last sparks of animosity in the breasts of the Irish people, nothing was more likely to quench the dying embers of rebellion, than opening of the prison doors.

Mr. W. H. K. Redmond.

MR. SEXTON (Kerry, N.) moved the adjournment of the Debate.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (SIR W. HARCOURT, Derby) hoped his hon. Friend would not press this Motion. The subject had been very fully discussed, and the House might now well come to a decision upon it.

MR. SEXTON stated, that speeches of great importance had been made by Members of the Liberal Party, and during the greater part of the time the Home Secretary had been absent. There had been, indeed, a remarkable expression of opinion on the part of the Liberal Party. He could not possibly compress the observations he had to make into 10 minutes, and the importance of the subject itself demanded an adjournment.

SIR W. HARCOURT said, that the Government, of course had a special interest in desiring a decision to be taken. The Amendment clearly amounted to a vote of censure of the most decisive character. The Government therefore wished to know whether or not they possessed the confidence of a majority of the House of Commons.

MR. J. REDMOND (Waterford), submitted, that the position taken up by the Chancellor for the Exchequer, could not be used as an argument for curtailing the Debate. Some hon. Members from Ireland who were intensely interested in the subject, had refrained from taking part up to the present by reason of the fact that a number of English Members were anxious to speak. It was a most unfortunate thing that whenever any Liberal Member was speaking the Home Secretary happened to be outside the House. He supported the Motion of the hon. Member for Kerry, and hoped he would push it to a Division if necessary. Surely, however, the right hon. Gentleman would not persist in choking off discussion.

The House divided on Mr. Sexton's Motion for the Adjournment of the Debate:—Ayes 79; Noes 286.—(Division List No. 4.)

It being then past half-past Five o'clock, the Debate stood adjourned.

MOTION.

THE LEICESTER ELECTION WRITS.

Motion made, and Question proposed—

> "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire and report on the Returns made to this House to the two Writs issued on August 22nd, 1894, for the return of Members to serve for the Borough of Leicester, and the circumstances attending the holding of the election; and whether the case is such as to require further action in respect of such Returns on the part of the House."—(*Sir Henry James.*)

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.), objected to the terms of the Motion as altogether too wide. If it were passed it would, on the mere suggestion that something irregular had taken place, refer the whole question of the election of any seat to a Select Committee, which might make any Motion. Nobody had petitioned against the Leicester election, and why, therefore, should they be asked to consider this matter? They could not make the law. If a mayor liked to hold two elections, would a Resolution of that House stop it? They would either have to say that the election was regular or irregular. If it were irregular it was a matter for petition, and no petition had been lodged. Why was the House to engage in a roving commission of inquiry as to whether two Members had been properly returned or not? Parliament had already referred the decision of such matters to two Election Judges. He thought the proposal made was most anarchical, and would upset the regular and settled procedure of having Election Judges to inquire into all petitions as to irregularites at elections. If such a proposal as this were accepted, what would be the position of the Irish Members supposing a Tory Government were in Office? If some suggestion of a Pigottist character were made as to irregularities at elections, and this Resolution had been adopted, if a Coercionist Government were in Office the Irish Members might find themselves unseated before they knew where they were. Let them stick to the regular and settled procedure, which was, that two Judges should try the question of the regularity or irregularity of elections if any petition were lodged against the return of a Member. Suppose such a Committee as that suggested held the opinion that an irregularity had been committed by the Mayor of Leicester, what was the inevitable conclusion? It would be that the seats were vacant. What other conclusion was possible if the decision were arrived at that an irregularity had occurred? If the seats were not vacant, what harm was done? Either the matter was pointed at the vacation of the seats or it was not. They had no guarantee whatever as to what future Governments might do, and he should strongly oppose the appointment of this Committee in its present shape, as he regarded the proposal as most objectionable and revolutionary.

Sir H. JAMES (Bury, Lancashire) observed, that nothing was further from his wish than to have a roving inquiry, as had been suggested by the hon. and learned Member, his only desire being to see that the Orders of the House were obeyed. The House had made certain rules as to elections, and if its Orders were disobeyed the remedy was for the House to see that they were properly enforced. When, for instance, O'Donovan Rossa was returned, he, being a felon, was not allowed to take his seat, because the House had never given up its right of seeing that its Orders were carried out. They must see that the elections were duly held, and not leave it to any constituency to choose the way of conducting elections. He had taken the words of his Motion with one object alone in view, and that was to get over the difficulty that had arisen in this case, he desiring that the gentlemen returned should retain their seats. He would point out that it was to be left to the House to decide whether any further action was necessary. He hoped the House would not accept the dangerous doctrine enunciated by the hon. and learned Member for Louth (Mr. T. M. Healy), that that House had no power to see its authority obeyed.

Mr. T. M. HEALY declined to withdraw his objection, and the consideration of the matter was accordingly deferred.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT (1894) AMENDMENT BILL.

Read 2 .

MOTIONS.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.

*Ordered—

That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire whether any and what changes in the present system of Weights and Measures should be adopted; that the Committtee do consist of Seventeen Members; that Sir John Barran, Mr. Burt, Mr. Crombie, Mr. Charles Fenwick, Mr. Alban Gibbs, Mr. Godson, Sir Edward Hill, Mr. Justin McCarthy, Sir Samuel Montagu, Mr. Jasper More, Sir Albert Rollit, Sir Henry Roscoe, Mr. James Stevenson, Mr. Stewart Wallace, Mr. Webster, Mr. Whiteley, and Mr. Wrightson be Members of the Committee; that the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records; that Five be the quorum.

—*(Sir A. K. Rollit.)*

The hon. Member explained that the appointment of a Committee was agreed to by the Government last year, but the necessary formalities were not carried out. This matter was one of great importance to trade, as we were isolated and had great difficulties in international business, in making quotations, tenders, specifications, &c., and so lost orders, and as his Motion only asked for a Committee of Inquiry he hoped the House would assent to it.

Motion agreed to.

MERCHANT SHIPPING ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Ralph Neville, Bill to amend the Merchant Shipping Acts.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday 27th March, and to be printed. [Bill 104.]

MERCHANT SHIPPING ACTS AMENDMENT (NO. 2) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. W. Field, Bill to amend the Merchant Shipping Acts.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 105.]

WINE AND BEERHOUSE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Herbert Lewis, Bill to amend the Law relating to the Licensing of Beerhouses and Places for the Sale of Cider and Wine by retail in England and Wales.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 106.]

LICENSING ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. H. Broadhurst, Bill to amend the Licensing Acts.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday 5th March, and to be printed. [Bill 107.]

COURSE OF BUSINESS.

On the Motion that the House do now adjourn,

Mr. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) pointed out that, after the recent Division, the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not, as was usual under such circumstances, move the Closure in order to terminate the Debate. Were hon. Members, therefore, to understand the Debate on the Amendment of the hon. Member for Dublin County would be continued to-morrow or that it was dropped? He need hardly say that when the Government had decided that the time spent on a Debate had been sufficient, and the House had by a large majority agreed with the Government, the rule was, that the Government should move the Closure and so settle the discussion. If that were not done in this case they ran the risk of the continuance of a discussion which the Government had decided was not necessary, a view which the House had endorsed. Would some Member of the Government say whether the Debate on the Amendment of the hon. Member for Dublin County would be continued to-morrow or whether any steps would be taken to closure those who wished to continue it?

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.) said, it was not for the hon. Gentleman to instruct hon. Members in the Rules of the House of Commons. But he rose particularly to express the hope that note would be taken of the fact that the sympathetic Tory Party they were asked to place in Office complained that the Closure was not moved on an Irish Amendment.

Mr. T. E. ELLIS (Merionethshire) said the disposal of the Amendment was not in the hands of the Government, but in the hands of the House.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned at Ten minutes before Six o'clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, 14th February 1895.

UGANDA.

LORD STANMORE moved for Papers relating to the administration of Uganda, and observed that, in renewing his application in another Session of Parliament, he was not without anticipation that his pertinacity might be attended with a favourable result. There had not been any Papers or Despatches communicated to either House of Parliament with regard to proceedings in Uganda since the departure of Sir Gerald Portal from that country. It was not unreasonable to expect that some portion of the correspondence should now be laid before this House, more especially when one recollected with what expedition in other cases of a similar character, where the responsibility of a Protectorate or of annexation had been assumed by this country, the despatches had been communicated to the public. If Papers could not be presented, he hoped, at all events, the Secretary of State would be able to impart some information to the House. Was it the case, as reported, that some extension had taken place in the district over which we had determined to exercise a Protectorate? The question, however, which was of real importance to Uganda and to us, was with regard to the communications between that country and the sea. From the tenour of observations by Ministers he did not entertain any sanguine hope that the railway, the line of which had been surveyed, would be undertaken by the Government, but at the same time his hopes were somewhat raised by an expression of opinion on the part of the Lord President of the Council, who in a letter to the Anti-Slavery Society stated that—

> "all he had committed himself to was that it did not seem requisite to take immediate steps during the present year—"

for the construction of the railway. But that was last year. The consideration which Her Majesty's Government had given to the subject must surely have come to an end now; and, therefore, he ventured to ask whether it was intended that a sum for the construction of the railway should be placed upon the Estimates of the present year; and, if not, what steps were being taken to improve the communication between the Victoria Nyanza and the sea? He would contrast for a moment the action taken by the much-abused Chartered Company and by Her Majesty's Government and their officials in Uganda. Some 200 miles of good road had been constructed at the private expense of the late Sir W. Mackinnon; fifty miles more had been constructed to meet that road, and the junction was probably by this time effected; so that there were 250 miles of good road made through the Company's territory towards Uganda. But what was the case on the other side? As far as he could learn hardly any, if any, steps had been taken towards improving the road between that point and the shores of Lake Nyanza. If that was not so, and almost the only persons from whom information was received, were officers of the Chartered Company and missionaries resident in that country—who might not, perhaps, be altogether unbiassed witnesses—it was very much the fault of Her Majesty's Government in not producing the information which would show where credit ought to be given if credit was due. A very pretty quarrel had arisen. The Chartered Company maintained that as Her Majesty's Government had limited and marked the boundaries of the Protectorate, the Company came again into possession of all that part of the country which they had formerly administered. Holding that view, they sent an Administrator there. When the Administrator arrived he found the British Commandant in possession, and he prudently did not attempt to exercise any functions of administration. Nevertheless, he was summarily deported from the district by order of Colonel Colville, the Commissioner. That might have been very just and proper; but however little right the Chartered Company might have to administer the government of that district, it surely was not contended they had not a perfect right to trade there. And if it were the case, as alleged in the letter of the Agent of the Company, that his private house and the stores in which the Company had deposited its goods were destroyed by the Commandant of the Imperial Government, it seemed to him the case called for explanation. According to the letter from which he had quoted, this British Commandant was one of Colonel Colville's domestic servants, and if that were true it might be a question whether he could properly be trusted with such powers as those which were certainly exercised by him, and which, he presumed, he rightly possessed. He had strong reason to believe that, on this occasion, Papers would not be denied; and, therefore, they should be able to form a judgment on the subject. He hoped it might be the case that the Government had taken more care for the keeping up communication between the lake and the coast than they had reason to suppose. In the absence of any such evidence the wildest and most absurd reports gained circulation, one of which stated that an agreement had been entered into by which a railway was to be constructed in such a position that the effect would be to drive all the commerce of East Africa from a British to a German port, and leave Uganda at the mercy of a foreign Power. He simply mentioned such a report to show its absurdity. He pointed out that he moved only for Papers relative to the administration of Uganda, and did not ask for any of the correspondence still pending between the Government and the Chartered Company. The late Sir Gerald Portal had told them that, before they could effect any real improvement in prosperity or commerce, check the slave-trade, and reap the benefit of that material progress, a system of transport must be made in Uganda, and the only means of effecting this was by the construction of a railway. The delays on the part of the Government in coming to a decision on this question had been a source of great cost to the British taxpayer; for, whereas by the present transport system it cost £90,000 a year to convey stores to Uganda, the amount of interest payable on the loans necessary for the construction of the railway would only be £47,000 a year. He begged to move that Papers be laid on the Table relating to the administration of Uganda

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Earl of KIMBERLEY): I am glad to be able to inform my noble Friend that there is no objection to laying the Papers on the Table of the House. I will now answer one or two of my noble Friend's remarks. One is capable of a very simple answer. He asked whether any extension had been given to the Protectorate, as announced last year. My answer is, there has been no extension. My noble Friend probably has in view the operations which have taken place especially in Unyoro, It is perfectly true that, at present, our occupation extends to a certain part of Unyoro, though not included in the Protectorate. That occupation has taken place simply for the reason that a war is going on with the Chief of Unyoro, with whom, unfortunately, it is impossible to come to any terms; and for the protection of Uganda it is absolutely necessary that a certain portion of the country of Unyoro should be occupied by our forces. The other point which my noble Friend referred to was a subject already very familiar to your lordships—namely, the construction of a railway from the coast to Uganda. I was rather pleased at the last remarks my noble Friend made, for he apparently demonstrated, to his own satisfaction, that we should save money immediately by the construction of a railway. I can assure him that if he will prove to us and the Treasury that the immediate result of constructing a railway would be to relieve us from a pecuniary burden, it would be, I think, the most conclusive argument I have yet heard in favour of the railway. I am sorry to say I have no anticipations whatever of any such immediate results. Whatever might be the advantages of the construction of a railway, I do not think it could be expected that for a considerable time it would pay its expenses. I have nothing to tell my noble Friend about the railway except this, that it has been by no means lost sight of by the Government, and, as my noble Friend quite naturally surmises, certain reports to which he refers as to some agreement with Germany about a joint railway have no foundation whatever. No one would dispute the advantage to Uganda of such a railway as that which it is asked should be constructed, but I am afraid I must ask my noble Friend to wait a little longer before we can make any announcement on that subject. As regards Uganda generally, I must say that the conduct of our officers there had been beyond praise. As far as we know—and undoubtedly we get but fitful reports at considerable intervals from Uganda—the administration of the Protectorate under Colonel Colville, who, I am sorry to say, is ill and is going down to the coast in consequence of that illness, has been admirably conducted. No doubt he was principally occupied, through no fault at all of ours, with the conduct of a war which was by no means without difficulty. That war has been conducted with great success at very moderate cost and with results, as regards the safety of Uganda, entirely satisfactory. With regard to internal affairs there has not been much to report. The country appears to be tranquil, and I think there is every reason to believe the people are satisfied with the present system under which they are administered. The number of our functionaries there is necessarily very limited, and it says much for the vigour and enterprise which characterise our officers in remote parts of the world, that so small a number of men are able to exercise so large and salutary an influence and to discharge their duties under undoubtedly great difficulties in such an admirable manner. My noble Friend referred to the difference of opinion between us and the Chartered Company as to the extent of the country now under the Company's Administration. My noble Friend correctly stated the claim of the Company, which is that they should re-occupy all the territory outside the Protectorate. We entirely decline to admit any such claim on their part. We hold that, having deliberately abandoned considerable portions of territory placed under their administration by the Charter, they cannot be allowed to resume the administration of that territory. It was true an officer was sent by the Company to Kavirondo and was informed he could not exercise any jurisdiction whatever in that place. As regards the details of what has happened, we have not yet received a report from Colonel Colville on the subject. We have only heard the Company's version, and therefore we refrain from commenting on the particular manner in which the officer was prevented from continuing his enterprise. I do not think there is anything more I could usefully add on this occasion. As I am about to present Papers, my noble Friend will have an opportunity of seeing what they contain and of making any observations upon them.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I have heard the statement of the noble Earl with very considerable regret. It seems to me to bear a very unhappy relation to the hopes which were excited in us from the same Bench two years ago. The tone has entirely changed—the tone of hopefulness of an early construction of some means of communication has disappeared, and in its place there is an intimation that we must wait for any fulfilment of those hopes until the spirit of the Treasury can be conciliated to the undertaking. I was sorry to hear the utterance of that ill-omened word. I know that when the Treasury lays its hand on any matter concerning the future development of the British Empire, the chances of an Imperial policy are small; and I am bound to add that I do not think, whatever the natural tendencies of the Treasury may be, they are likely to be diminished or corrected under the guidance of which they at present have the advantage. I think Her Majesty's Government are dealing lightly and cavalierly with a very grave matter. It is a question in which time is all important, and time is being allowed to run through our fingers. The noble Earl treated the matter as if it was purely a question of administration. Of course the question of administration interests us very much, and we hope that great advantage may be conferred upon the natives by the introduction of English Government, and the enforcement of the peace which accompanies English rule; but the administration of the country is not the sole or main object that should interest us. It is our business in all these new countries to make smooth the paths for British commerce, British enterprise, the application of British capital, at a time when other paths, other outlets for the commercial energies of our race are being gradually closed by the commercial principles which are gaining more and more adhesion. Everywhere we see the advance of commerce checked by the enormous growth which the doctrines of Protection are obtaining. We see it with our three great commercial rivals, France, Germany, and America. The doctrines of Protection are stronger and stronger, and operate to the exclusion of British commerce wherever their power extends. We see even in our own colonies the same sinister influence at work. Nay, what has recently passed in India may warn us how powerful the current is which is running against the interests of our trade. I do not wish to express an opinion on a matter which is foreign to the present Debate, but what has passed in India does show the intense tendency to Protection which seems to accompany the awakening of every race and the increase of local power in every portion of the world. The moral of that consideration is that it is the duty of the Government to spare no opportunity of opening fresh outlets for the energy of British commerce and enterprise, and I confess that not wholly, but in a great measure, this great undertaking of England with respect to Uganda has been taken, to my mind, and, I believe, to the mind of vast numbers in this country, for the reason that it is a country of enormous fertility, and it has what many countries of fertility have not—a large, increasing population, or, at least, a population that will increase under the favourable conditions of peace, and a population of very fair intelligence. It is a matter of vital importance that British commerce should have free access to that country, free access to the whole of the upper valley of the Nile. But what is going on? Can we afford to sit with our hands before us and say that when the Treasury can be pacified, that when Sir William Harcourt's Imperial instincts receive an additional reinforcement we can undertake this matter, which we are now calmly putting upon the shelf, and can complete the railway, on the commencement of which we counted many, many months ago? We have no such respite given us. We have no such liberty of delay. There are four, if not five, Powers that are steadily advancing towards the upper waters of the Nile. There will be a competition—I will use no stronger word—for the advantages which predominance in that region will confer. I hope that it will be a competition of a friendly and tranquil character, but no one can foresee what the future will be. At all events it will be a most severe competition, and while you are sitting with your hands before you they are advancing. Many rumours reach us of diplomatic events and diplomatic engagements which have but one meaning, and that is that others covet the predominance in those fertile regions which have so rich a promise of future prosperity; others covet that predominance which you are allowing idly to slip by in deference to the scruples of the Treasury. My Lords, there is another reason why it behoves us of all nations in the world to be specially sedulous to lose no time in opening communications with this fertile country. In this competition that is preparing between various nations we fight with special weapons, weapons which, if we give them a chance, will confer upon us enormous advantages, but which it is necessary that we should be able to handle properly. If this competition is ultimately settled merely by negotiations, by diplomatic weapons, by a protocol of some European capital, I know not what the issue may be. We have so many interests in so many parts of the world, we are so much exposed, that it may be doubtful whether we shall be willing to run anything approaching to risk for the sake of this African possession; but we have another means of making ourselves secure—a means which it may be said belongs to us alone—and that is not the power of our Government or the negotiation which they may carry on, but the energy, the initiative, the force, the individual force which our people carry with them into any new country which they inhabit. I do not think that our Government—I am not speaking of one Party or the other—I do not think that our Government is of much advantage to Englishmen who go into a new country. I think it is rather a disadvantage. Almost everything that is done at home is apt to hinder them, and though we have, as the noble Earl has justly said, officers unparalleled in the world, they come generally with their hands tied to their sides with red tape, and behinds them sits the spirit of the Treasury like Care behind the horseman, which paralyses every effort and casts a shadow on any enthusiasm they may feel. I do not think Governments aid our people much when they go to the possession of a new territory, but our people bring with them such a power of initiative, such an extraordinary courage and resource in the solving of new problems and the facing of new difficulties, that if they are pitted against an equal number—I care not what race it is or what the part of the world is—and if you keep politics and negotiation off them, in a few years it will be our people that will be masters, it will be our commerce that will prevail, it will be our capital that will rule, though not a sword has been unsheathed, and though not a blow has been struck in their defence. See the splendid work Mr. Rhodes has done in the southern end of Africa. He has obtained little from any Government in this country, but he has laid the foundations of a splendid empire, and even the Government of the Transvaal, hostile as it has been to us, is finding the pressure of English activity all round them so strong that they are slowly giving way, and we have no doubt that by friendly and peaceful, and yet by irresistible force, they will be compelled to fall into line and to join the great unconscious confederation that is growing up. My Lords, this is a tremendous power, but it requires one condition. You must enable it to get to the country where its work is to be done. You must open the path. It is for you to make the communication. It is for you to enable our people to get there. It is for you to enable capital to be invested and commerce to be extended. I therefore should look upon it as a deep disgrace to the present generation, if, with the opportunities we have, we were by sheer delay and carelessness, by sheer anxiety to avoid or make the financial difficulty of the moment, or by undue respect paid to a philosophy which in this country is now wholly antiquated and outworn—we were to allow the opportunity of a splendid empire for our grandchildren to slip from our grasp, My Lords, it is an opportunity in which time is all important. Do not tell me that our finances will not allow of it. No Government ever made a railway out of its income. It is a matter that must be done with borrowed money, and which may be done now as well as in any condition of our Budget. I believe what was said by the noble Lord opposite is true—that the saving of the mere expenses of porterage would go far to pay the interest on the loan you would have to raise. But that is not really your serious objection. I believe I carry with me the feelings of the greater portion of the Government when I say that this enterprise should not be delayed any longer; and I say, further, that if, in deference to any feeling shown within the Cabinet, or if, in deference to the professional but excessive jealousy of the Treasury, you do not take the measures which a year or two ago you contemplated, and you do not take advantage of this opportunity, which never will return, you will bear a responsibility in the face of posterity, in regard to which I should be sorry to belong to the company of Statesmen on whom it should fall.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY AND LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (The Earl of ROSEBERY): I can truly say that with a considerable part of the observation of the noble Marquess I cordially concur. I do not think that as regards our Imperial responsibilities abroad there is any great margin of difference of opinion between the noble Marquess and myself. But I must say that I think that in a matter of this kind the responsibility of judgment must rest with the Administration, and with the Administration alone. I have never denied the expediency, at the proper time, of making a railroad a considerable portion of the way, if not the whole of the way, to Uganda. But, on the other hand, I have always maintained, and I shall always maintain, that it is only the Executive that can properly judge of the right moment for making any proposal in that direction. I will give you one, and only one, incident of what I mean. It is a circumstance to which the noble Marquess did not allude, but it is a circumstance that must have some bearing on the situation—it is that of the administration of the territories through which this railroad is to pass. At present there is no definite arrangement with regard to that. There are negotiations going on; they have been going on for some time. They have gone on, perhaps, too long. It is not always easy to fix the responsibility of procrastination on one side or the other; but, at any rate, whether these negotiations have gone on too long or not, they are not yet at an end, and I cannot think that Her Majesty's Government would have been justified in introducing into the elements of confusion thus existing in those regions a new scheme of a railroad which would traverse the country. My Lords, the noble Marquess speaks of it as a measure of pressing moment. Well, it may be a matter of some urgency. It may be that it would be better sooner than later, and much sooner than much later. But I would ask him to remember this, that we are in a position perfectly prepared at any moment to commence the railroad. The survey is drawn out and is in existence; and practically no step remains but the making of the contract whenever the Government shall think the moment for making the railroad or portion of the railroad has arrived. Therefore, as regards any competitors in this race for whatever commerce there may be to provide for the central region of Africa, we, at any rate, have a good and sufficient start. I will not follow the noble Marquess into considerations which he introduced; but which he himself admitted had no close bearing on the question—I mean with regard to the influence of Protection on the world. I may only say that the remarks made by a responsible representative of his Party in the other House on the subject also, the other night, made me think that Protection is running a good deal in the heads of the Front Benches of the Opposition. If the railroad to Uganda, and the commerce likely to result from that railroad, would do away with the ramparts set up by Protection in the various States of the world to our commerce, I do not think there is any Member of the Government who would hesitate in making the railroad at once. But that, if the noble Marquess will excuse me saying so, appears to me to be the weak point of his argument. He has told us of the vast wealth of commerce we may expect from Uganda. Heaven knows I am the last person in this House or out of it to underrate the advantages of Uganda. I have preached of them always, and I have been responsible perhaps for the close union of Uganda with the British Empire. But when I am treated to a discourse on the side of Protection all over the world, and am then led to infer almost irresistibly that these will be avoided by making a railroad to Uganda, I cannot help saying that this is missing a premiss without which the noble Marquess is not able adequately to come to his conclusion. The noble Marquess touched on a point very wisely and eloquently, if he will allow me to say so; and what he said upon that point did not tend to the conclusion at which he arrived. He said that what we had done abroad had been done by the unaided energies of our sons; that the children of Great Britain, transplanted abroad, have, by their intelligence, their capacity, and their dash, been able to establish themselves all over the known world, and that all this has been done without any aid from the Imperial Government. But that does not support the conclusion of the noble Marquess, that we ought at once to give assistance in Uganda to energies and capacities which, unaided, have done so well. I do not want to push the argument too far; but I desire to point out that the noble Marquess in taking that line was detracting a little from the conclusion at which he wished to arrive. My Lords, nothing can absolve this or any other Government of their responsibility in regard to this question. But may I ask the noble Marquess to give a little confidence to the judgment of the Administration? The noble Marquess, in the soaring ambition of his contention, leaves this House and enters the secret and the sacred doors of the Cabinet, and portrays with vivid imagination, which leaves nothing to be desired, but which has absolutely no substratum of fact, the Chancellor of the Exchequer defending the doors of the Treasury against the impassioned assault of my noble Friend near me. It may well be that the Treasury which the noble Marquess says is always hostile to anything that concerns the maintenance and development of the Empire—though it has yet been so fortunate as to raise our Navy Estimates to an unprecedented pitch for the very purposes to which, according to the noble Marquess, it is always adverse—it may well be that the Treasury, under the circumstances, would oppose for the moment the making of a railroad, which I admit is important, but which does not appeal powerfully to the imagination of everybody in the country. But that is not the fact. It is not the fact that the Treasury have so refused. It is only the fact that the Government have thought it right to weigh wisely the *pros* and *cons* of this transition period of the Protectorate of Uganda before constructing the railway to the Victoria Lake. There is one other point on which I wish to say a word, and it must be a very guarded word. The noble Marquess alluded to agreements, of which he had heard rumours, having been drawn up in reference to African territories within a somewhat limited period of time. It is not for me to say anything positively about these agreements to-night, but I can assure the noble Marquess that they are engaging the anxious and vigilant attention of the Government, not merely in relation to the position of the territories affected in Africa, but also as to how far the provisions of that Convention may actually reflect on the position in Europe. I regard the documents, which I believe have been inaccurately reported, as instruments of the greatest gravity; and I can give the House and the noble Marquess a positive assurance that they are engaging the consistent attention of Her Majesty's Government.

LORD STANMORE said, the Foreign Secretary had omitted to answer one important question which he had put to him. He had asked whether a Vote would be asked this year for the railway; and, if it would not be asked for—which he understood his noble Friend to convey was the case—what steps would be taken to improve communication in Uganda? To the latter question his noble Friend had returned no answer. If his noble Friend the Lord President of the Council would permit him he should like to demur to one thing that had fallen from him. His noble Friend had said that we had plenty of time for a start in this matter of the railway——

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: Pardon me. I hate being misquoted. I did not say that.

LORD STANMORE: Then what did you say?

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY: I said we had an ample start of all the other Powers.

LORD STANMORE said, that was exactly what he meant to have said as having come from his noble Friend; and he was inclined to doubt it very much. The German Government had already made a railway 20 miles in extent; this year they were going to make another section of it; and it was plain to those who read the newspapers that a greater plan was on foot.

***THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY**: With regard to the Vote I have stated that I could make no reply. As to the other point arrangements have been made for steamers and launches on the lake, which we think is a matter of importance.

LORD STANMORE: But that does not improve the road.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: I did not say it did.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned at Thirty Minutes past Five o'clock, till To-morrow, at a Quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 14th February 1895.

The House met at Three of the clock.

LONDON VALUATION AND ASSESSMENT BILL.

Order for First Reading read.

SIR H. JAMES (Bury): I desire to ask your judgment, Mr. Speaker, on a point of order affecting this Bill—whether this Bill is a fit subject to be introduced into this House as a private Bill. I do not now ask you to fix any definite rule as to what constitutes a public Bill; it is difficult to form an exact rule, but I respectfully suggest to you that this Bill clearly goes beyond the line which divides private from public Bills. In the first place, although, without doubt, it only refers to London, it affects 5,000,000 of Her Majesty's subjects. It is, moreover, stated in the Preamble that it is introduced for the purpose of forming a common basis of Imperial and Local Taxation. It also proceeds to change entirely the law as to the mode of assessment for rating and taxation, it abolishes the jurisdiction of a Court which has hitherto administered the law, and creates a new tribunal of an entirely different character. But there is one reason why I especially call your attention to this matter. This Bill repeals five public Acts of Parliament, and once you get a private Bill repealing a public Act, you are treading on most dangerous ground. The Bar Committee have remonstrated with the Lord Chancellor on the practical inconvenience to anyone connected with the law of this course being taken in the case of Bills of such importance. If a public Act repeals a public Act, we can turn at once to our digest, but no library contains all these private Acts, and, therefore, students and practitioners who are not acquainted with the proceedings of the House never know whether there has been any repeal of a public Act by a private Act. The Court takes no judicial notice of private Acts; they have to be given in evidence like any other document. This Bill offers a most flagrant example of the evil to which I have referred; and I am sure great practical evil will follow in the administration of the law under this Bill if it is dealt with as a private measure. I respectfully ask your ruling as to whether this Bill ought to be treated as a private Bill.

MR. J. STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton): The proceeding the promoters of this Bill have taken is, they believe, similar to that taken on the London Streets and Buildings Bill, which was passed through this House as a private Act last Session; and in that Bill a number of public Acts were repealed. In that case the difficulty about public and private Acts was met, as the House will recollect, by an entry on the Public Statute Book, to the effect that that Act had been passed and others repealed by it. The present Bill proposes to deal in the same way with the question of the assessment and valuation of property in the Metropolis. With respect to the assessment of London there have been special London Acts, such as the Metropolis Valuation Act of 1869. The general law of 1862 is undoubtedly dealt with to some extent in the present Bill, but the relation of London to that general law is not altered by any provision of the Bill, and I submit that this case is practically on all fours with the Streets and Buildings Bill. The alterations of the powers of a corporation, the constitution of a local Court, and the assessment of the poor rate are, I submit, fit subjects for a private Bill if other things are in order. This Bill was drafted in consultation with the majority of the Local Assessing Authorities of London, and the contention upon it will not be found to be widespread, while a large portion of it is very generally approved. When the substance of this Bill was introduced into the House last Session as a public Bill, considerable objection was taken, on the ground that the local interests with which it dealt could only be adequately represented by the right of appearing, by counsel or in person, before a Committee upstairs. The Bill affects the quinquennial valuation of London, and I believe on all sides of the House there is a desire for uniformity in that matter. Hitherto, no doubt, Bills of this class affecting London have been introduced as public Bills, but I submit that the real reason of that has been that London has no representative authority interested in all parts of it to take up such Bills. I submit that the procedure on private Bills insures justice and full examination of the subjects dealt with, and that in such a complicated matter as this it is really for the public convenience that it should be dealt with by the methods of private legislation.

*MR. SPEAKER: In reply to the inquiry of the right hon. Gentleman, I have to say that the question now raised is one of great importance, because it touches on the question of what should be the scope of, and the interests involved in, a measure introduced into this House as a private Bill. I observe that this Bill in its Preamble professes to repeal certain specified Acts, and I have to observe that all those Acts were introduced into this House as public Bills. It further proposes to amend and to incorporate the provisions in a Bill introduced last year, touching the Metropolis, which Bill was also introduced as a public Bill. I am far from saying that, because a private Bill affects public Bills and repeals public Acts, that that is always a fatal objection to its being introduced as a private Bill. But we must consider the scope of the public Acts which a private Bill proposes to repeal, and in this instance the Acts proposed to be repealed are of such vast magnitude and cover such a vast area that, I think, there are objections to the Bill being proceeded with as a private Bill. The Bill covers the whole of the Metropolis, and, though it does not quite follow from all precedents that a Bill affecting the entire Metropolis must necessarily be introduced as a public Bill, still I think that a review of these precedents will establish the conclusion that Bills affecting the Metropolis should, as a rule, be introduced as public rather than as private Bills. There was, it is true, in 1857 a Thames Navigation Bill, which was introduced as a private Bill; but, on the other hand, there was a Weighing of Corn (Port of London) Bill in 1864, which was introduced, and properly so, as a public Bill, seeing that it covered an area extending over nearly four counties and affected a population of 4,000,000, and also an extensive foreign trade. In the year 1889 the Coal Duties Bill was introduced as a public Bill. I may here remark that, when the Thames Navigation Bill was introduced in the year 1881 as a private Bill, objection was taken on the score of the multiplicity and vastness of the interests involved, and the private Bill was given up and was re-introduced as a public Bill. In 1890, on the London County Council Bill, there was objection taken on the ground that certain clauses were thought to be too large to be included in a private Bill, and they were expunged. If I am asked whether any clauses might be expunged from the present Bill, and the Bill so brought properly within the scope of private Bills, I should say that nothing of the Bill would be left, because the whole Bill is of such vast importance that it is impossible to separate the clauses. But more than that, this Bill contains clauses altering Acts which affect not only local rating, but affect also the basis of Imperial taxation. That is another very serious objection. Whether railways would be affected by the Bill is a moot point, but it is one which should clearly be discussed in this House, as to whether the altered mode of assessment of railways would affect the *status* of railways within the Metropolitan area. I mention that, to show that the interests involved are much more than local, that they cover Imperial taxation as well as local rating; and if I am told that the Bill is a local Bill I am bound to reply that it is local only in the sense in which a Bill that applies to Scotland or Ireland may be called a local Bill; I should say that the magnitude of its scope, the area touched upon, the interests implicated are so vast that I think full publicity should be given to the Bill, and that it should go through all the stages of a public Bill, and when it is placed on the Statute Book it should be accessible to all as in public Acts, and not placed among those which are merely local and personal. On these grounds, therefore, looking to the magnitude of the area, the magnitude and multiplicity of the interests involved; looking to the fact that a new jurisdiction and a new Court of Record are sought to be created in the matter of assessment, apparently doing away with an appeal; looking to the interests involved; to the fact of the repeal of public Acts, which have been themselves introduced as public Bills; and looking to the great interest of the Metropolis, I think full publicity should be given to the Bill; and, in my judgment, it would be unwise and improper to introduce it as a private Bill. In these circumstances, and for these reasons, which I hope I have not stated at too great length to the House, I have no doubt upon the matter, and am of opinion that the Bill ought to be introduced as a public Bill.

MR. STUART made formal Motion to withdraw the Bill.

Bill withdrawn.

QUESTIONS.

BRITISH IMPORTS INTO TURKEY AND JAPAN.

Colonel H. VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, if Her Majesty's Government has recently assented to an increase in the duty levied upon British goods entering Turkey and Japan; and, in such case, what representations were made to their Imperial Majesties the Sultan and Mikado in favour of British exports receiving equal treatment to that accorded in the United Kingdom to Turkish and Japanese exports?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. Grey, Berwick, Northumberland): No new Treaty has been concluded with Turkey, and the duties remain as they were. The Tariff annexed to the Treaty recently concluded with Japan, provides for a higher rate of duty on certain British goods entering Japan. Under Clause 1 of the Protocol attached to the Treaty, the new Tariff might, in certain circumstances, have come into operation a month after the Ratifications of the Treaty had been exchanged. It is, however, subject to the provisions of Article 23 of the Treaty of 1858, by which it is expressly stipulated that Her Majesty's Government and British subjects will be allowed free and equal participation—

> "in all privileges, immunities and advantages that may have been or may be hereafter granted by His Majesty the Tycoon of Japan to the Government or subjects of any other nation;"

and the Provisions of the new Tariff are therefore necessarily suspended until the revision of the Treaties between Japan and other Powers has been effected. British commerce with Japan is also fully protected by Articles 5 and 15 of the New Treaty against the imposition of any duties heavier than those levied on the commerce of any other State. The New Treaty with Japan was negotiated upon the same principles as are observed in dealing with other civilised Powers, and the Tariff of Duties arranged under it will not compare unfavourably with those of most European nations. No useful purpose would have been served by arguing with the Japanese Government in favour of the principles of Free Trade.

NAVAL EXPENDITURE IN IRELAND.

Sir T. ESMONDE (Kerry, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, if any, and if so how much, of the money taken last year for the increase of the Navy has been spent in Ireland; and whether, in the event of any more being taken, it is proposed to spend any more; and if so within what time.

***The CIVIL LORD of the ADMIRALTY** (Mr. Edmund Robertson, Dundee): I assume that the question relates to increased ship-building. Tenders were invited in Ireland for the hulls and machinery of two first-class battleships and six large cruisers, and for the machinery of three other first-class battleships, to be built in the dockyards; but only one tender of those above-named could be accepted (on account of price) for the machinery of a first-class battleship. The money spent last year and liabilities incurred amount to £98,702. It cannot be stated how much more will be spent or in what time; but tenders for any new work will be invited from Irish firms considered competent to undertake it.

Captain DONELAN (Cork, E.): Will you say how much of the money was expended at Haulbowline?

Mr. ROBERTSON: That is not in the question at all.

Mr. FLYNN (Cork, N.): Would it not be possible to give work at Haulbowline in the construction of certain classes of ships, such as small cruisers?

Mr. ROBERTSON: I hardly think it is so, but it is a question to which I cannot give a definite answer.

Mr. CREAN (Queen's County, Ossory): How much of the money has been spent in actual work and how much in superintendence?

Mr. ROBERTSON: I have not the information that would enable me to answer that question.

IRISH FISHERIES.

Sir T. ESMONDE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, if he will consider the advisability of appointing a Government Inspector in addition to the three Inspectors of Fisheries for Ireland, whose special duty it will be to attend to the mackerel-curing industry, in view of its large and growing importance.

The following questions on the same subject stood upon the Paper :

CAPTAIN DONELAN : To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received a memorial from the mackerel-curers of the Counties of Cork and Kerry, praying for the appointment of an inspector, specially fitted to judge the quality of the fish and the barrel, and with power to affix the Government brand, at a small fee per barrel to cover the costs of salary and expenses, as practised with good results in the herring-curing trade in Scotland ; and, further, praying that efforts should be made to induce the Government of Russia and the United States to reduce their import duty on cured mackerel to that on cured herrings, the duty on cured herrings being 7s. per barrel in Russia and 4s. 2d. per barrel in the United States, whereas the duty on cured mackerel is 28s. per barrel in the former country and 6s. 3d. per barrel in the latter ; and whether, in view of the fact that Irish mackerel-curers are at present practically dependent on American markets for the sale of their produce, and the desirability of encouraging this growing Irish industry, he will grant the prayers contained in this memorial ?

MR. MAURICE HEALY (Cork) : To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received a memorial from an association of mackerel-curers in the Counties of Cork and Kerry, pressing for the appointment of an additional fishery inspector in Ireland with the special function of looking after the mackerel-curing industry, which is fast increasing in that country ; whether it would be possible, as suggested by the memorialists, to make the office self-supporting by establishing a Government brand for cured mackerel, at a small fee, similar to the herring brand in Scotland ; and whether the Government propose to adopt the suggestion of the memorialists ? Also, whether he has received a memorial from an association of mackerel-curers in the counties of Cork and Kerry, asking that the Government should cause representations to be made to the Governments of the United States and of Russia respectively, with a view to the reduction by these countries of the import duty on cured mackerel ; whether he is aware that the import duty on cured mackerel in the United States is 6s. 3d. per barrel, and in Russia 28s. per barrel, as against an import duty in these countries on herrings of 4s. 2d. per barrel and 7s. per barrel respectively ; and whether he will cause representations to be made in the sense suggested ?

MR. GILHOOLY (Cork County, W.) : To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether, in view of the importance of the mackerel fishery in Ireland, he will consider the advisability of appointing a Government Inspector, whose sole duty it will be to attend to the mackerel-curing industry ; and, whether he will establish a Government brand similar to the herring brand in Scotland ?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-on-Tyne) : In answering the questions of the hon. Bart. (Sir Thomas Esmonde), it will be convenient that I should at the same time answer four other questions on the paper relating to the same subject. In December last I received the memorial to which reference is made, from the Irish Mackerel Fisheries Association ; and the reply given to that memorial stated that the question of establishing a Government brand for Irish-cured mackerel had been engaging the attention of the Government, but that the matter was one requiring very careful enquiry, and that legislation would be necessary to provide for the branding fee, and the punishment of any infringement of the brand. It was also stated that the question of import duties of cured mackerel exported to Russia and the United States would form an element in the general question, which is manifestly one requiring mature consideration. The Inspectors of Fisheries believe that the reason for the lower tariff in Russia on herrings, as compared with mackerel, is that herrings form a staple article of diet among the Russian peasantry. As regards the United States, the mackerel fishery forms an important industry for American fishermen, and a high protective duty is imposed on foreign imports of mackerel to that country. With regard to the suggested appointment of an Inspector, in addition to the three Inspectors of Fisheries, the Government are of opinion that three Inspectors are ample for the work of inspection under the Irish Fishery Department. One of these Inspectors is able to devote a considerable portion of his time to the work of fishery development of the Congested Districts Board, and in the performance of his duties he is constantly moving about the vicinity of the mackerel fisheries.

NEW QUAYS IN KERRY.

Sir THOMAS ESMONDE (Kerry, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, if he can state when the works at the proposed new quays at Glasha and Tullig (County Kerry) will be commenced?

Mr. J. MORLEY: Tenders for these works are to be lodged with the Congested Distiets Board before the 19th instant, and arrangements will be made to start the works as soon as possible after that date.

HOURS OF PRISON WARDERS.

Mr. T. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland—(1)whether the Trades Warders in Mountjoy Prison, who work at their trades from 6 a.m. to 6.15 p.m. for eight months of the year, and from 6.45 a.m. to 6.15 p.m. for four months, are required, in addition, to do duty as evening guards for three days in the week; (2) whether these men have also to do ordinary duty as warders on Sundays, and only get leave every third Sunday; and, (3) whether some are required to do night duty as well?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The General Prisons Board informs me that none of the Trades Warders, in this prison, work at their trades for the length of time mentioned in the question. Work commences at about 7 a.m. in Summer, and 7.45 a.m. in Winter, and ceases at 5.45 p.m. all the year round. Two hours of the interval are allotted for meals, and half-an-hour for serving the food to the prisoners. In addition, all indoor trades get an hour's exercise daily. The Trades Warders are required to do duty as evening guards, amounting on an average to about six hours a week. The reply to the second and third paragraphs is in the affirmative. Night duty consists of about five hours once in every twelve nights,

and those who perform it are allowed half the following day off duty.

Mr. HARRINGTON asked whether it was not the fact that, while other Warders were at liberty, the Trades Warders were either at work or engaged in supervision, and whether the right hon. Gentleman did not think that men who were continuously on duty for so many hours ought not to be relieved from night duty?

Mr. J. MORLEY was not sure whether the Trades Warders got the same hours of exercise as others, but he would find out. He could assure the hon. Member that the duties of the Warders were not excessive or prolonged.

Dr. KENNY (Dublin, College Green) asked whether a Return could be laid on the table, showing the number of hours worked by the Warders.

Mr. J. MORLEY said, he would consider the possibility of giving a Return, but the information it would contain would be the same as that given in the answer to the question.

LABOURERS' COTTAGES IN IRELAND.

Mr. P. M'GILLIGAN (Fermanagh, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland—(1) how many labourers' cottages have been erected under the Labourers (Ireland) Acts in the Enniskillen Union up to the present time; (2) whether he is aware that an application from Thomas Love, Mallylusty, Blacklion, and Michael M'Loughlin, Carrentrenall, Blacklion, had been refused, and that one of those men immediately afterwards was evicted by his landlord, an *ex-officio* Guardian, though the rent was fully paid up, and was compelled to seek a habitation with his young family in an outhouse for several days and nights; and, (3) whether he will make inquiries into these cases, and generally with a view of having the Labourers Acts enforced in the Enniskillen Union?

Mr. J. MORLEY: (1) No cottages have been erected in Enniskillen Union. (2) Representations on behalf of the persons named were refused by the Guardians, on the ground that there was a number of vacant houses in the locality available for their accommodation. Statements to the effect mentioned in the concluding part of the second paragraph were made to the Local

Government Board by one of these persons. (3) The Local Government Board are always ready to direct an inquiry where a *primâ-facie* case for such action on their part is established; but having regard to the reports made to the Guardians by the Medical Officer of Health and the Sanitary Sub-officer as to the existence of vacant houses in the district this case did not appear to the Board to be one in which any advantage would result from such an inquiry.

VACCINATION.

MR. F. A. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to a sentence, passed by Mr. Denman at the South-western Police Court in September last, on F. D. Summers, of seven days' imprisonment with hard labour for non-compliance with a vaccination order; whether he is aware that F. D. Summers was, contrary to law, subjected to the hard labour regulations while in prison; and, whether he will direct compensation to be made to him for this illegal punishment.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. H. H. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): I have communicated with the Magistrate and the Prison Commissioners, and am informed by them that Summers was neither sentenced to hard labour nor subjected to hard labour.

THE EXECUTION OF JOHN TWISS.

DR. KENNY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has seen the statement given in evidence by Governor Andrews, of Cork Gaol, at the inquest on John Twiss, executed on last Saturday, 9th instant, that magisterial investigations, at which a Resident Magistrate, the Crown Solicitor, and Inspector Irwin were present, were held in Cork Gaol, and evidence taken in reference to the crime of which Twiss was subsequently convicted, and that at those investigations the prisoner was not professionally represented; and whether such investigations are according to custom; and, if so, whether he will take measures to put an end to such proceedings?

MR. J. MORLEY: In answer to my hon. Friend, when further evidence against a prisoner is obtained after he has been committed for trial, it is, I am informed, the usual and proper course, and a course taken in favour of the prisoner, to take that evidence in his presence, lest he should be taken by surprise by its production at the trial. The evidence in this case was that of a man named Reidy, but was not used at the trial. The prisoner was not professionally represented when the witness's evidence was given in the prison. Copies of the evidence taken were, on the same day, forwarded to the solicitor acting for Twiss, and that is the answer to the question on the Paper. As, however, the hon. Member mentioned the name of District Inspector Irwin in the question, perhaps I may be allowed to take this opportunity of referring to certain allegations that have been made affecting him. It has been alleged that he paid money to Twiss to swear against a certain person or persons; that he told him that he had "a rope round his neck;" and that he had shown Twiss photographs of certain persons. I have received to-day from Inspector Irwin a Report, in which he stated explicitly that he never at any time, either in court or in prison, offered any money to Twiss to swear against any person or persons, or for any other purpose whatever, during the time that he was employed in the investigation of the case, or at any other time. He never mentioned to Twiss that he had a rope round his neck, or at any time showed him photographs of persons.

DR. KENNY reminded the Chief Secretary that he had made no insinuations against Irwin. Did the right hon. Gentleman approve of the practice in criminal cases—where a man's life might be in jeopardy—of additional evidence being taken in a prison, away from all publicity, against a prisoner who had no professional aid, whether in his presence or not? Why was it not given in open Court or reserved for the trial? Under what Statute was evidence taken in this way?

MR. J. MORLEY replied, that he could not say under what Act of Parliament the procedure was based. But he had informed himself about the practice, which was in favour of the prisoner. When new evidence was found against a prisoner after he had been committed for trial, two courses might be taken before the trial took place—the depositions might be taken outside the prison and communicated afterwards to the prisoner, or the evidence of witnesses might be taken by a Magistrate in prison in the presence of the accused. This was to prevent new evidence being sprung upon the prisoner at the trial.

MR. HARRINGTON asked whether the right hon. Gentleman thought it was in favour of a prisoner, when he had a solicitor to defend him, that additional evidence should be taken against him in a prison and behind that solicitor's back?

*MR. SPEAKER said, this question was not in Order, as it discussed what was in favour of the prisoner or not, which hardly arose here.

MR. HARRINGTON then asked whether notice was given to Twiss's solicitor that the additional evidence would be taken, and whether he had an opportunity of using it for prisoner's defence if it was not in favour of the prosecution?

MR. E. F. VESEY KNOX (Cavan, W.) asked whether the right hon. Gentleman had considered the effect of witnesses being examined in the walls of a prison?

MR. J. MORLEY said, it did not matter what the effect on witnesses was, he was right in assuming that the practice of taking the evidence in prison and in the prisoner's presence was in favour of the prisoner. Notice that the evidence would be taken was given to the prisoner's solicitor; but the witness was not produced at the trial, and the evidence was not used for any purpose.

DR. KENNY pointed out that perfectly inadmissible evidence might be given against a prisoner who had not the protection of a legal adviser.

MR. J. MORLEY said, he had discussed the matter thoroughly with those who were competent to advise him, and he was convinced that the course taken was not injurious to the prisoner.

MR. W. REDMOND asked if representatives of the Press were at liberty to attend the taking of evidence in prisons?

MR. J. MORLEY: I am afraid not; but I cannot say.

DR. KENNY was proceeding to put another question, when—

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

LONDONDERRY BARRACKS.

MR. J. JORDAN (Meath, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, seeing that troops can easily be moved to Londonderry from head-quarters at Enniskillen, where there is already sufficient accommodation, he will reconsider his intention of proposing a large outlay of public money for providing barracks for the head-quarters in Londonderry?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.): This question was determined some time ago, when it was decided on strong military grounds to transfer the troops to Londonderry. There is no idea of reconsidering it.

MR. R. W. HANBURY (Preston) asked whether it was decided on military or public grounds that the head-quarters should be at Londonderry? So many of our troops were merely engaged in police duties.

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: From the information supplied to me it appears it was on military grounds.

In answer to MR. JORDAN—

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN added that the transfer would have been carried out before, but for the difficulty of obtaining a site.

INCLOSED POST CARDS AND INVOICES.

MR. JAMES ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether the Department has received numerous complaints from business houses respecting the conditions laid down in the Post Office Guide, page 27, for the return of inclosed post cards and invoices, &c.; and whether he can see his way to remove the complaints that have been made against the present arrangements?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY, Nottingham, E.): The complaints from business houses of the new regulations for the return of undelivered post cards, invoices, &c., had not been numerous. It takes time for regulations of this kind to become fully known, although previous notices are issued by the Department; but the inconvenience which has arisen from senders being unaware of the change is diminishing day by day. The regulations affect only packets prepaid ½d., and such packets being in themselves unremunerative, it is only reasonable that senders should pay the cost of returning any which they desire to recover in case of their non-delivery.

THE ROYAL MARINES.

MR. H. O. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty what proportion of the additional officers and men of the Royal Marines voted in the Estimates for 1894–5, have up to the present date been appointed to, or enlisted in, the corps.

*MR. E. ROBERTSON: Five officers, and 485 warrant officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates; total 490, out of 500 additional voted.

SAVING LIFE AT SEA.

MR. C. H. WILSON (Hull, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he sees his way to recommend payment out of the public funds to deep sea fishermen who are continually, at great personal risk, saving the lives of the crews of sinking or abandoned vessels, and who are also at pecuniary loss in having to leave the fishing grounds and bring their vessels into port with those saved; whether, in the case of the crews of foreign vessels being saved, the claims for compensation or reward will be brought before their Governments; and whether a special medal or decoration could be instituted?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. BRYCE, Aberdeen, S.): Payments out of the Mercantile Marine Fund are made by the Board of Trade to deep sea fishermen under Section 677 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1894, when they have saved life at sea from British vessels at great personal risk. The Board also grant medals in many cases, and, as the House is aware, Her Majesty, whose sympathy with acts of courage and chivalry has been so often displayed, has instituted the decoration of the Albert Medal for conspicuous cases of gallantry in saving life at sea. In the case of the crews of foreign vessels being saved, the circumstances are usually brought under the notice of foreign Governments by their local Consuls, and rewards are often bestowed.

THE UNEMPLOYED IN LIVERPOOL.

MR. J. KEIR HARDIE (West Ham, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that the police of Liverpool are preventing the unemployed of the City from meeting on Corporation ground, near the Exchange, which is a common place of public meeting; and that members of the police force have been guilty of violence towards the unemployed whilst preventing them holding their meetings at the place referred to; and whether the police have instructions to prohibit such meetings; and, if so, by whom have such instructions been given?

*MR. ASQUITH: I am informed that the piece of ground to which the hon. Member alludes is not Corporation property, but a public highway, where to hold a meeting would cause great public inconvenience, and would seriously impede the business of the port. The Lord Mayor informs me that meetings are now, and always have been, allowed to be held on a piece of land situated in the central part of the town, and which, although Corporate property, has not been dedicated to the public as a highway. The reports furnished to me go to show that the police acted justifiably in preventing the meeting, and that no undue severity was used by them in the execution of their duty. But I have no authority in matters of this kind over the Liverpool police, who are under the control of the Watch Committee of the City.

ANGLO-FRENCH WEST AFRICAN AGREEMENT.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if, in the recent arrangements with France in West Africa, steps have been taken to prevent the duties and restrictions imposed upon British trade by that Republic in Indo-China and elsewhere?

SIR E. GREY: The negotiations were, from the nature of the case, limited to certain questions connected with West Africa. The commercial arrangements which have been entered into will be found in a Parliamentary Paper which is on the point of being issued.

THE HIGH SHERIFF OF CORK CITY.

CAPTAIN M'CALMONT (Antrim, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the

Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether Alderman Edmund Walsh, who has been selected by the Lord Lieutenant to fill the office of High Sheriff of the City of Cork, is the same Alderman Walsh as was challenged by the Crown and ordered to stand aside, when the jury was being sworn at the recent Assizes, for the trial of Eugène Keeffe on the capital charge?

MR. J. MORLEY : Alderman Edmund Walsh was ordered by the Crown Solicitor to stand aside in the case referred to. It would be without precedent and inexpedient to mention the reasons which weighed with the Crown Solicitor in the exercise of his discretion. As to his having been selected by the Lord Lieutenant to fill the office of High Sheriff, I may observe that he was named first on the list of three persons nominated under the Statute by the City of Cork Town Council to fill the office of High Sheriff, and the Lord Lieutenant took the first name on the list.

CAPTAIN M'CALMONT : I should like to know whether this Gentleman, in the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown, is not competent to find a verdict in accordance with the evidence, and in accordance with the oath, and whether this same gentleman will now have the framing of the jury panel for the City of Cork?

MR. J. MORLEY : For many reasons, I understand, a juryman on the panel may be ordered to stand aside. There may be certain questions of prejudice or local connection, and so forth, which may render it undesirable that a person should serve, but I do not know whether those were the reasons which actuated the Crown Solicitor in the present case. Those reasons may be quite inconsistent with the reasons which may actuate the Town Council of the City of Cork in nominating Sheriffs.

MR. MAURICE HEALY : Is there any precedent for allowing a gentleman to serve on a jury panel of which he is in charge?

DR. KENNY : Is it not a fact that a High Sheriff is, by his office, precluded from serving on a jury?

CAPTAIN M'CALMONT : Is it not a fact that this gentleman was challenged by the Crown about the middle of December, and that he did not enter on his office as High Sheriff till January 1st?

Captain M'Calmont.

MR. J. MORLEY : I must ask that that question be put down. I have answered all that is material to the point raised in the question on the Paper.

THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY.

MR. G. W. E. LODER (Brighton) : I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works, whether he can state how far the buildings of the New National Portrait Gallery have advanced towards completion; what further steps are necessary before the pictures can be moved from Bethnal Green; and, whether it is the intention of the Government to put down a Vote in the Estimates in connection with the preparation of the Gallery for the reception of the pictures.

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. HERBERT GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): The building has so far advanced that the architect is now of opinion that he will be able to hand it over to the Board of Works at the end of April, or beginning of May. The two top floors are now practically finished, and it will be possible to begin the removal of the pictures from Bethnal Green in the course of next month. The hanging could be carried out during the time that the lower floors are being finished, so that the galleries might be opened to the public in June. A sum of £400 has been provided in the Estimate for Public Buildings for the next financial year to cover the cost of completing the fixtures and furniture of the new building. The cost of removing the pictures from Bethnal Green will be borne by the Science and Art Department.

ADMIRALTY LABOURERS AT DEPTFORD.

MR. J. H. C. HOZIER (Lanarkshire, S.): On behalf of the Member for Deptford (Mr. Darling): I beg to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty, whether men employed by Government in the Deptford Victualling Yard on general labourers' work are paid 20s. a week (for a week of 48 hours' work); and whether a contractor employing men in the same yard on the same class of work is compelled by the terms of his contract with the Government to pay to his men 6½d. per hour, being 26s. for 48 hours' work?

MR. EDMUND ROBERTSON : Labourers employed by the Admiralty at Deptford are paid a fixed rate of 20s. a week. Contractors' labourers are paid by the hour, at the rate stated in the question. It should be borne in mind that Admiralty-hired labourers have privileges not enjoyed by contractors' men—namely, holidays with pay; hurt pay, and medical attendance when hurt; gratuities under certain conditions on discharge; and, above all, more constant employment without the expense of frequent removals.

MR. J. KEIR HARDIE: Is it not a fact that the privileges referred to are only estimated to amount in value to 1s. 6d. a week?

MR. E. ROBERTSON: I do not know, but I will give the hon. Member an opportunity of ascertaining their value if he wishes.

STAMPS ON PRIVATE ENVELOPES OR POSTAL WRAPPERS.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Postmaster General, (1) whether any charge is made for printing stamps on private envelopes or postal wrappers, if the total value of the stamps is £10; (2) whether he is aware that at present the charge for printing private post cards is 2s. 6d. per quire, or £2. 10s. per ream; and that the actual cost of this printing does not exceed 2d. to 3d. per quire, or 3s. to 5s. per ream; and (3) whether he will extend to private post cards the same regulations and charges as for postal wrappers and private envelopes referred to in the first question?

MR. ARNOLD MORLEY: The answer to the first paragraph of my hon. Friend's quetion is, No. The answer to the second is, Yes; except that the actual cost is considerably higher than the price mentioned in the question. As regards the third paragraph, I must point out that its adoption would not only necessitate additions to the establishment at Somerset House, for which I see no justification, but would also demand additional space, which it is impossible to provide. My hon. Friend's question shows that very considerable facilities are already afforded to private individuals by the Inland Revenue Authorities; and, for the reasons given, I cannot hold out any hope of increasing them. I need not remind my hon. Friend that it is always open to the private purchaser to avoid the charge in question by stamping his own cards with adhesive stamps.

POSTMASTERS.

DR. KENNY: I beg to ask the Postmaster General, whether it is a rule of the Post Office that postmasterships are to be given only to those who have been previously employed in the service; whether this rule is rigidly applicable to post offices which are Crown Offices; whether Maryborough (Queen's County) Post Office is a Crown office; and, whether Mr. Fennell, recently appointed as postmaster to that office, had any previous connection with the Postal Service; if so, what was the nature of the connection; and, if not, why was the rule above referred to departed from in his case.

MR. ARNOLD MORLEY: Crown Offices are simply offices that are the property of the Department and have really nothing to do with what I understand to be the object of the hon. Member's question. Consequent upon contemplated alterations which would have reduced the Telegraph work at Maryborough, the salary was reduced provisionally from £100 to £90—this being below the amount at which persons already in the service are as a rule appointed; and it was under these circumstances that the appointment was conferred on Mr. Fennell, who was unconnected with the Service, and who was strongly recommended.

THE BANTRY ESTATE.

MR. GILHOOLY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, is he aware the trustees of the Bantry Estate have, by claiming a right to the foreshore, prevented the erection of a boat slip at Trafrask, and that a number of the Tenants of said Estate have been thrown out of employment, and are in a state of destitution; and, if so, what steps the Congested Districts Board and the Board of Trade purpose taking in the matter?

MR. J. MORLEY: The works at the place mentioned were suspended for the reason stated, but it is expected that the difficulty will very shortly be removed and the works resumed.

MARKET TOLLS AT ENNIS.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, having regard to the evidence given at the public inquiry held in Ennis on 8th June, 1888, by Mr. J. O'Meara, Assistant Commissioner on Market Rights and Tolls, and also to the Petition presented to His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant by the Town Commissioners of Ennis on the 22nd May last, praying for an immediate inquiry into the right, if any, of Lord Leconfield to levy tolls, and to the reply given by the Lords Justices of Ireland, the Government will bring in a Bill enabling the Town Commissioners of Ennis to acquire the right of levying tolls and establishing markets, on such terms and conditions as may be considered equitable and just?

MR. J. MORLEY: I have already informed the hon. Gentleman that the validity of Lord Leconfield's Patent to the Customs and Tolls of Ennis came before a Jury in 1847, that evidence was then given on behalf of the Crown and the Patentee, and that there was a disagreement of the Jury. No proceeding has since been instituted to impeach the Patent, and there is no evidence forthcoming for the purpose. I can only again add that whatever may be the opinion as to the necessity for general legislation, the Government do not propose to introduce a Bill dealing with any one particular place.

AFFORESTING CROWN LANDS IN WALES.

MR. J. HERBERT LEWIS (Flint Boroughs): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, whether the Commissioners of Woods and Forests have made any experimental plantation in Wales; whether they have made inquiry with regard to the desirability of further afforesting Crown land in Wales: and, whether they intend to take the necessary steps to afforest any part of the lands over which they have control?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): The Commissioner of Woods informs me that he has just completed a plantation of five acres on a Crown Farm in Merionethshire principally for the purpose of affording shelter. Last autumn he visited certain wastes of the Crown Lordship of Denbigh with a view to decide whether planting could be carried out with success. The Common Rights existing over these wastes presented difficulties which he discussed with the parties interested. He proposes to visit this and other districts in the coming spring, but it is necessary to bear in mind that the Commissioner of Woods has no control over these waste lands that would enable him to appropriate any portion of them for planting unless the common rights existing over those parts were extinguished.

DISMISSAL OF AN IRISH SCHOOL TEACHER.

DR. KENNY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether it has been brought to his notice that Mr. Quinlivan, recently school teacher to the Stradbally (Queen's County) National School, has been dismissed from his post by the Manager, the Rev. Mr. Brennan, P.P., without any cause assigned, and that the Rev. Mr. Brennan took forcible possession of the school by breaking in the door; whether the police were present on the occasion; and, if so, for what reason and by whose directions were they present; whether he is aware that Mr. Quinlivan, relying on the recent resolution of the Bishops at Maynooth, that an appeal would lie to the Bishop of the Diocese in all such cases as above, did appeal to the Bishop, the Most Rev. Dr. Lynch, and the coadjutor Bishop, the

Most Rev. Dr. Comerford, the latter of whom replied that he could not interfere, and the former did not reply at all; and, whether he will cause an inquiry into this case?

MR. J. MORLEY: The National Education Board inform me that in 1892 the School referred to was reported as in a very unsatisfactory state, both as to discipline and order of the school and the efficiency of the instruction. In November of that year the teacher, Mr. Quinlivan, was severely reprimanded by the Commissioners. A similar report upon the school was made in 1893, and the attention of the Manager, the Revd. Mr. Brennan, having been drawn to the state of affairs, he gave the teacher three months' notice of removal. The Manager, however, did not carry out his intention of removing the teacher at the end of this period, but extended to him further time, and subsequently gave him a final three months' notice, which expired in November last. The police were not asked to remain in the neighbourhood on the occasion of the breaking open the door of the school, but they were requested to be in the neighbourhood when the new teacher opened the school about a month afterwards. The case does not appear to be one calling for further inquiry.

DR. KENNY: I wish to ask whether it is not a fact that Mr. Brennan tried to get him another school in the neighbourhood, and, whether the right hon. Gentleman in the proposed legislation which he has foreshadowed, will take care that such autocratic power shall not be left in the hands of school managers?

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): Is it a fact that this teacher's case was so bad that the other teachers in the school refused to have anything to do with him?

MR. J. MORLEY was understood to say that he did not remember ever having promised legislation on the subject.

CATHOLIC EMPLOYÉS.

MR. BODKIN (Roscommon, N.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General, is he aware that Catholic employés in the Telegraph Department, Dublin, have been deprived by the present Controller of a privilege heretofore enjoyed, of a time allowance from the prescribed hours of attendance for the purpose of hearing Mass on Sundays and holy days of their Church, and whether he will give directions that such privilege be restored?

MR. A. MORLEY: Post Office servants who are allowed to absent themselves from duty for the purpose of performing their religious devotions on week-days are required to make up the time thus lost to the Department at some other part of the day. Established officers employed on Sundays are paid at special overtime rates, and are, therefore, only paid for the actual hours in which they are employed.

MR. BODKIN: The right hon. Gentleman has not answered my question in any sense. It is whether a privilege of attending Mass without loss of pay has been taken away by the present Controller, and whether the custom existing for ten years has been recently abrogated?

MR. A. MORLEY: The privilege was no doubt allowed, but it never received sanction from headquarters. The change was made when all Sunday work was ordered to be paid for.

MR. BODKIN: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the privilege had existed for ten years; that the Catholics are the only people who suffer by the change, and that grave dissatisfaction exists in regard to the change?

MR. A. MORLEY: I cannot say how long it had existed, but I can say that Catholics are treated exactly on the same footing as every other denomination in the service.

IMPORTATION OF FOREIGN FRUIT.

SIR W. HART DYKE (Kent, Dartford): I beg to ask the President of the

Board of Agriculture if he will lay upon the Table of the House a Copy of any Instructions that have been issued with a view to check the importation of foreign fruit marked fraudulently as English fruit?

*Sir J. T. HIBBERT said, that so far as the Board of Customs was concerned no special instructions had been issued regarding the importation of foreign fruit, but such importations were subject to the general instructions issued in connection with the prohibitory sections of the Merchandise Marks Act of 1887.

EXTRA POLICE IN COUNTY CLARE.

Mr. W. REDMOND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, if his attention has been drawn to the resolution passed at the recent Presentment Sessions in Ennis calling on the Government to relieve the county Clare of the cost of extra police; and, whether, in view of the peaceable condition of Clare, he will take steps to carry out the desire of this resolution?

Mr. J. MORLEY said, he had seen the resolution passed at the Presentment Sessions at Ennis. A reduction of the extra force of constabulary for Clare by 25 men had been decided upon, and this would be equivalent to a relief from taxation of about £800 per annum.

LIGHT RAILWAYS IN ENGLAND.

Mr. J. L. WHARTON (York, W.R., Ripon): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he proposes to lay this Bill for providing light railways shortly upon the Table of the House?

Mr. BRYCE: I hope to introduce the Bill at the earliest opportunity I can find.

THE SAFETY OF TROOPSHIPS.

Mr. GATHORNE-HARDY (Sussex, East Grinstead): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty what provision is

made on board troopships for saving life in the event of shipwreck or collision?

Mr. E. ROBERTSON said, the only troopship in commission, the *Malabar*, had boat accommodation for 1,245 men in light marching order without packs, and could therefore accommodate in boats on an emergency all the numbers she carries. Transports which are merchant ships adapted to carry troops are governed, as regards boat accommodation, by a scale according to tonnage. This scale is the *maximum* laid down by the Board of Trade under the Merchant Shipping (Life-saving Appliances) Act, 1888. They are also obliged to carry life-belts, so that, with the boats, every man can be supported in the water on an emergency.

CAVALRY HORSES.

Mr. F. V. KNOX: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War how many men there are to each horse in the British cavalry; whether it is the fact that each cavalry regiment only averages 300 horses, as against 672 in the French cavalry, 662 in the German cavalry, 935 in the Austrian, and 855 in the Russian; and, whether he will consider the advisability during the present year of low prices and agricultural depression of making increased purchases of horses for the Army?

*Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: In India the British cavalry have 114 men to 100 horses, in the colonies and Egypt 132 men to 100 horses, and at home 157 men to 100 horses. The percentage of dismounted men is necessarily greater at home than abroad, because regiments at home receive and train their own recruits. With the present establishments for cavalry regiments the military authorities do not desire to increase the number of horses, as a proportion of dismounted men is a necessity. The average number of horses with a British cavalry regiment is 388. As to the figures quoted by the hon. Member for foreign countries, I would only say that the number of horses must, of course, bear proportion to the number of men, which varies in different countries.

MR. ELLIOTT LEES (Birkenhead) asked the right hon. Gentleman if there was not great difficulty in getting undocked horses?

MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said, that this subject did not arise out of the question.

THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

MR. F. V. KNOX: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury why Clause 11 (as to sub-letting and payment of wages at the current rate), in the contract for the Parliamentary Debates, contains no provision as to the payment of a penalty in case the Controller shall be of opinion that it has been broken; and, whether he will consult the Law Officers of the Crown with a view to framing a definite and enforceable form of contract, against sub-letting and for the payment of wages at the current rate, to be inserted in all Government contracts?

*SIR J.T. HIBBERT: Clause 13 of the contract already imposes a penalty for the breach of any of its conditions in the shape of an immediate forfeiture of the contract. In addition to this the tenderers were expressly warned that the Controller would "be compelled to consider the question of removing the names of any firms who may fail to comply with the spirit of the resolution from the list of those allowed to undertake work for the Department." As regards the last part of the hon. Member's question, he is no doubt aware that the resolution was aimed against the abuse arising from sub-letting.

MR. J. H. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy Burghs): May I ask if, in giving this contract, the Treasury were aware of the fact that the present contractors intended to sub-let part of the contract?

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT: The Treasury were not aware of that fact. To do it is not contrary to the contract.

MR. DALZIEL: I would ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he thinks it is fair to all the other firms who took the trouble to tender for this contract that the most vital provision should be departed from in the case of this particular firm that got the contract?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: In reply to that question, I may state that the Committee which sat upon the question a few years ago passed a resolution in favour of allowing the persons who tendered for "Hansard" to obtain their reports in the best way they could, and, therefore, it was not thought necessary to lay down any rule against sub-letting the reports.

MR. DALZIEL: I am sorry to press the right hon. Gentleman, but this is a very important point indeed; I would ask him if the recommendations of the Select Committee did not deal with the point as to taking reports from newspapers. This case of sub-letting deals with the employment of a special staff. Is it not the case that all the firms, with the single exception of this firm that got the contract, tendered on the basis that they would be unable to enter into any sub-letting whatever, and is it not the case that this firm which thus got the contract has departed altogether from the provisions of the tender, and has been allowed to enter into a contract for sub-letting?

SIR J. HIBBERT: I was not aware that it was the intention of this contractor to obtain the reports in the way in which he is said to have done, but it has always been allowed to the contractors to obtain the reports in the best way they could. There is nothing in the contract to prohibit it or to say that they should employ a staff of reporters of their own, or that they should employ reporters in any other way.

MR. DALZIEL: What does the clause in the contract mean, then?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: The clause against sub-contracting is only in regard to the printing, and there is nothing about the reporting.

MR. C. J. S. DODD (Essex, Maldon): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman how these reports are being obtained and what the sub-contract is? (*Cries of* "Order!") I daresay other hon. Members know, but I do not.

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: I can inform my hon. Friend that they are obtained, I believe, through the means of *The Times* reporters. *The Times* reports, I understand, are very good reports, almost the best reports to be obtained, and I do not know that there is any great objection to it.

MR. J. G. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): Were not eight or nine reporters previously engaged to furnish these reports, and are they not now, some of them, paid only a couple of pounds a week?

[No answer was given.]

MR. T. M. HEALY: Am I to understand that the reports of the Irish Members will in future be taken by *The Times* reporters?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT: *The Times* reporters, as I understand will take the report of each gentleman's speech in full, and these reports *in extenso*, will be sent to the editor of *Hansard*, who will curtail those speeches to the proper length required?

IRISH POOR LAW EXPENDITURE.

MR. F. V. KNOX: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will consent to the Return relating to Irish Poor Law Expenditure on the Paper for this day?

MR. J. MORLEY: There will be no objection to the proposed Return. But I think it only right to explain to my hon. Friend that the information required can only be obtained from clerks of Unions, and that the preparation of the Return will take a considerable time.

MAGISTRATES' CLERKS.

MR. S. STOREY (Sunderland): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when the Return, moved on the 23rd August, 1894, as to Borough and County Magistrates, and that of 24th August, as to remuneration of Magistrates' Clerks, will be issued; and, what is the cause of the long delay?

*MR. ASQUITH: The Return as to Borough and County Magistrates has been prepared during the Recess, and is now being printed. It was presented in dummy yesterday, and will be issued as soon as possible. The Return as to remuneration of Magistrates' Clerks was only moved for on the last day but one of last Session, and, therefore, was not presented in dummy before the rising of the House. It was presented on the 7th instant, and ordered by the House to be printed on the 8th, and will no doubt be issued shortly.

HIRED MEN IN THE DOCKYARDS.

MR. H. T. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN (Kent, Faversham): I beg to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty, whether the Admiralty will consider the case of the hired men in Her Majesty's Dockyards, who, if they are placed upon the establishment, are not allowed to count for pension the time they may have served as hired men, although in many cases this time amounts to many years?

MR. E. ROBERTSON: As I explained to the hon. Member last Session, the Regulations governing the award of pensions are common to all those employed in the service of the Crown, and are based upon the Superannuation Acts, and the Treasury Minutes issued under their authority. It is not in the power of the Admiralty alone to act in the direction suggested in the question.

MR. HOZIER said he should call attention to the matter on the Navy Estimates.

IRISH POOR LAW EXPENDITURE.

Return ordered showing the total remuneration from all public sources of the Clerk to each Union; the amount paid by the Guardians to the Solicitor to each Poor Law Board; and the total remuneration from all public sources of the Doctor of each Dispensary District in Ireland, during the past two years, in the following forms:—

I.—REMUNERATION OF CLERKS TO THE UNION.

Name of Union.	Clerk's Salary.		Other remuneration—				Pension (if any) paid to Former Clerk, giving his Age, and Date when he was pensioned.	Other Profession or Occupation of Clerk (if any).*
			Under Parliamentary Registration Acts.		From other Sources or under other Heads.			
	1893.	1894.	1893.	1894.	1893.	1894.		

* State here whether Clerk devotes his whole time to the work.

II.—REMUNERATION OF SOLICITORS TO BOARDS OF GUARDIANS.

Name of Union.	Total Amount of Solicitors' Bills paid.		Amount of Costs of Litigation.		Amount of Out-of-Pocket Expenses.		Costs under the Labourers' Acts.	
	1893.	1894.	1893.	1894.	1893.	1894.	1893.	1894.

III.—REMUNERATION OF DISPENSARY DOCTORS.

Name of Union.	Name of District.	Area.	Salary of Doctor.		Remuneration from other Sources.				Pension (if any) paid to Former Doctor, giving his Age, and Date when pensioned.
					Registration and Vaccination Acts.		From other Sources or under other Heads.		
			1893.	1894.	1893.	1894.	1893.	1894.	

—(*Mr. E. F. Vesey-Knox.*)

THE ISLAND OF COLL.

Sir D. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he has received a protest from the inhabitants of the Island of Coll complaining that the division of the Wards for the purposes of the Local Government Board has been made without due consideration having been given to the number of electors, and against the wishes of a large part of the population; and whether he will investigate the matter and endeavour to remedy the grievance complained of?

The SECRETARY for SCOTLAND (Sir G. O. Trevelyan, Glasgow, Bridgeton): A protest was forwarded to the Local Government Board for Scotland, who, after inquiry, informed the complainers on the 21st of January that the Board had no power to interfere with the action of the County Council, but that, if they were dissatisfied, the proper course was for them to make a representation to the County Council, who alone have power to make any alteration in the Wards that have been fixed. I do not know whether any such representation has been made. Parliament having vested full discretion in the County Council, the responsibility for the division of the Parish into Wards must rest with that Body.

LONDONDERRY ASYLUM.

Mr. J. ROSS (Londonderry): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Asylum Board of Control have as yet decided on the site of the new Londonderry Asylum?

Mr. J. MORLEY: A site has, I understand, been offered for the new asylum, which is considered suitable provided satisfactory arrangements can be made for the water supply.

CUSTOMS OUTPORT CLERKS.

Mr. H. PAUL (Edinburgh, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether it is true that a Memorial sent by the Customs Outport Clerks to the Board of Customs in January, 1892, and to the Lords of the Treasury on the 17th of May, 1892, still remains unanswered; whether he can give any explanation of the delay; and when the Memorialists may expect a reply?

Sir J. T. HIBBERT: I cannot trace any Memorial of the date mentioned, but a Memorial dated January, 1893, and presumed to be the one in question, was originally addressed to the Board of Customs, and was subsequently sent by the clerks direct to the Treasury. The subject of the Memorial has involved questions of consideration between the Board of Customs and the Treasury, the settlement of which has been unavoidably delayed, partly owing to the changes in the Board. I can assure the hon. Member that there shall be no unnecessary delay in the matter.

CIVIL BILL EJECTMENTS.

Mr. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the fact that large numbers of Civil Bills in Ejectments are served by persons other than Civil Bill Officers, with the result that large numbers of tenants are charged fees in excess of those allowed by Law; whether the judicial statistics are in part founded upon Returns made by Civil Bill Officers as to the cases in which Ejectments are served, Returns necessarily erroneous to the extent of ejectments not served by them; and whether he will consider the desirability of obtaining an Order in Council amending the practice with regard to the service of Ejectments?

Mr. J. MORLEY: My attention has been called to this matter by a Memorial received from Civil Bill Officers of Donegal and Londonderry. I am advised that—(1.) Processes in Ejectment or Replevin may be served by other persons than Civil Bill Officers. Other Civil Bills must be served by Civil Bill Officers. This is regulated by Section 15 of 14 and 15 Vic. Cap. 57, and His Excellency has no power to interfere. (2.) A table in the Judicial Statistics shows the number of Ejectments, Replevins, and other Civil Bills served in each year as shown in Returns furnished by Civil Bill Officers. This Return is necessarily incomplete as regards Ejectments and Replevins, and there is no means of obtaining a complete Return of Ejectments served by persons other than Civil Bill Officers. Steps will be taken in future issues of the Judicial Statistics to obviate any misunderstanding on this point by amending the heading of the table. (3.) The matter being thus one which is regulated by Statute, my hon. Friend will see that it cannot be interfered with by the Lord Lieutenant or the Privy Council.

ST. JOHN'S INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS.

MR. A. O'CONNOR: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will lay upon the Table a copy of the Report of the proceedings at the inquiry directed by him into the administration of St. John's Industrial School, Walthamstow, and of the Report of the Inspector thereon, together with the terms of any decision arrived at by the Home Secretary with reference to it?

*MR. H. H. ASQUITH: There is no objection to laying on the Table the Report of the Commissioner and the letter subsequently written to the managers by the direction of the Secretary of State.

THE RELEASE OF THE REV. S. HARRY.

MR. C. WILLIAMS (Notts, Mansfield): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has received a largely and influentially signed Petition to the Queen from the inhabitants of Guernsey, praying for the release of the Rev. S. Harry, who has been sentenced by a minority of the Royal Court of Guernsey to six months' imprisonment, he having inadvertently performed an illegal marriage service; and what action he proposes to take thereon?

MR. H. H. ASQUITH said, he had received a Petition on behalf of the Rev. S. Harry. He had communicated with the Lieutenant-Governor of Guernsey, and was now waiting for a Report which had been promised from the Royal Court upon the case and the Petition. He had also called for a medical report as to Mr. Harry's health.

ROMAN CATHOLIC CLAIMS IN UGANDA.

*SIR C. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government have yet come to a decision with regard to the validity of Roman Catholic claims for compensation arising out of events in Uganda which occurred during the Government of that district by the British East Africa Company; and whether, in case such claims have been sustained, they are being considered in relation to any payment which may have to be made to the British East Africa Company?

SIR E. GREY said, that the question of Roman Catholic claims formed part of the general negotiations with France about pending questions in Africa, and no settlement had been come to.

COOLIE RECRUITING IN BENGAL.

MR. C. E. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India, whether his attention has been drawn to the remarks concerning the recruiting of coolies in Bengal, made by Mr. Toynbee, Commissioner of Bhagalpore Division, and published in the *Calcutta Gazette* of the 3rd October last, in which he gave many instances of criminal complaints, made in the Damka district, with reference to coolie recruiting, and also of cases of abduction of women and children for a similar purpose in Deoghur, and of the forcible carrying off of youths in Godda district; and, whether, in view of the constant and apparently unavoidable abuses to which the present system of recruiting coolies for the tea plantations of Assam, &c., gives rise, he will consult the Government of India, with a view of gradually abrogating these special laws, and leave tea planters in India to obtain coolies like other employers of labour, in the open market, and under ordinary conditions?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.): I have seen the remarks to which my hon. Friend refers, and I find that they have also received the attention of the local authorities. I know that the Government of India are most anxious to gradually abrogate the special law for Assam, and that their recent Amendments of the Act were framed with a view to pave the way for a system of absolutely free migration. I will, however, again call their attention to this subject.

RIOTS DURING LABOUR DISPUTES.

MR. S. WOODS (Lancashire, Ince): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether a Departmental Committee has recently been appointed to further consider the subject of riots during labour disputes; if so, what was the composition of the Committee; whether it has issued a Report; and, will he lay a copy of the Report upon the Table of the House?

*Mr. H. H. ASQUITH: The Committee to which my hon. Friend refers dealt with riots generally, not especially with riots occurring during labour disputes. The Report has been published by the Stationery Office, and will be presented to Parliament.

THE PARISH OF SKELMORLIE.

Mr. T. H. COCHRANE (Ayrshire, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, with reference to the statement in his decision refusing the application of Skelmorlie to have a separate Parish Council, that it would be in direct opposition to recent legislative precedents; would he state to what recent legislative precedents he referred; whether, seeing that under the Local Government Act of 1894 he has recently obtained power to give Parish Councils to parishes situated similarly to Skelmorlie, he will reconsider his decision; and, whether, as he had been informed that Skelmorlie was a parish situated partly in one county and partly in another before he directed an inquiry to be held, what steps he proposes to take to relieve the inhabitants of the unnecessary expense thus incurred.

Sir G. O. TREVELYAN: Section 49 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1889, is the precedent which I had more particularly in view. The Boundary Commissioners who were constituted by that Act were enjoined to frame orders dealing with parishes so that each parish—

> "If the Commissioners shall in the whole circumstances of the case deem it necessary or expedient, may be within a single county."

I am informed that whereas there were 64 civil parishes in two or more counties in 1888, there are now only seven. I think the decision in the case of Skelmorlie, on the evidence produced at the inquiry, was a right decision. The order has been gazetted, and any representation made in the course of the statutory 40 days will be carefully considered before it is confirmed. I have no power to relieve authorities appearing at an inquiry of any expenses which they may incur.

THE PROPOSED STATUE TO OLIVER CROMWELL.

Mr. L. P. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works how much money the Government propose to ask out of the public taxes of Great Britain and Ireland for the purpose of erecting a statue to Oliver Cromwell; and, whether he will undertake, when the Estimates come on, to afford an opportunity to the House to express an opinion on the expenditure?

Mr. H. GLADSTONE: The sum proposed to be taken in the votes of Parliament for 1895–96 is an instalment of £500. I am unable as yet to give any further information. When the Estimates come on full opportunity will of course be afforded for an expression of opinion by the House.

THE IRISH NATIONAL EDUCATION BOARD.

Mr. T. SEXTON (Kerry, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the vacancies in the Board of Commissioners of National Education have yet been filled?

Mr. J. MORLEY: As my hon. Friend knows, the National Board consists of 20 members, 10 of whom are Catholics and ten of whom are Protestant. There were three vacancies on the Board, two for Catholics and one for a Protestant. Of the two Roman Catholic vacancies, one seat has been accepted by Dr. Walsh, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, and the Protestant seat has been accepted by Lord Plunkett, the Protestant Archbishop of Dublin. The other Catholic seat has been accepted by Mr. Harrington, of Cork.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): Are we to understand that the Chief Secretary has appointed to the Board of National Education the principal opponent of the system of national education in Ireland?

Mr. J. MORLEY: That is a question which ought not to be put in that form.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL: Is it not a matter of notoriety that Dr. Walsh, the Archbishop of Dublin, is the strongest and most persistent opponent of the mixed system of education in Ireland?

MR. T. M. HEALY: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the Protestant Archbishop of Dublin is the principal opponent of Catholicity in Ireland?

MR. J. MORLEY: I submit that there is not the time for discussing the matter raised by the hon. Member for South Tyrone. I may say, however, that our object in trying to secure the services of these two distinguished men, was to have the highest representative authorities on the Board, of the communions that are interested.

MR. T. SEXTON: With reference to the statement that Dr. Walsh is an opponent of the system of mixed education, I wish to ask the Chief Secretary whether it is not a fact that the clergy of the arch-diocese of Dublin, who are under the ecclesiastical control of Dr. Walsh, are the managers of schools under the National Board?

MR. J. MORLEY: Yes; I think that is so.

THE NICARAGUA CANAL.

SIR EDWARD HARLAND (Belfast, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been called to the fact that the Bill of Senator Morgan for the construction of a ship canal by the United States Government from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans, through the State of Nicaragua, was passed by the Senate of the United States of America on the 25th ult., and that the Bill is now before the House of Representatives; whether he is aware that Senator Morgan, who is Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, during his speech in favour of the Bill, stated that no foreign Government had raised any objection to the Bill; whether, inasmuch as the question of the construction of the Nicaragua Canal is one of great importance to British shipowners, owning, as they collectively do, two-thirds of the tonnage of the world, Her Majesty's Government will cause urgent representations to be made to the United States Government against any provisions in Senator Morgan's Bill which are detrimental to the interests of British shipping; and whether Her Majesty's Government will consider the propriety of urging upon the United States Government the importance of the creation of a Joint Commission, British and American, to take up and deal with the construction of the proposed Nicaragua Canal and its status when built?

SIR E. GREY: The answer to the first two paragraphs is in the affirmative. It is not usual to make representations against Bills not promoted by the Government which are under discussion in the Legislature of a foreign country. Her Majesty's Government consider that such a canal as the proposed Nicaragua canal should be under International control, and whatever steps may be desirable will be taken to advance this view, but we have no reason to suppose that the United States Government will not maintain their Treaty engagements.

WORKING MEN JUSTICES IN IRELAND.

MR. MICHAEL AUSTIN (Limerick, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether any working men had been appointed Justices of the Peace in Ireland; and, if so, how many?

MR. J. MORLEY: If the expression "working men" means artizans or daily labourers, none have been placed in the Commission for counties. There have, however, been instances in which working farmers have been appointed to the Commission. The Lord Chancellor will consider each application on its merits. Borough appointments are not made by him.

ARMENIA.

MR. F. A. CHANNING: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whether, having regard to the importance of obtaining the fullest disclosure of the truth as to events in Armenia, steps will be taken by the Foreign Office to secure the rights of British subjects to visit all parts of the Turkish Empire under the provisions of the Capitulalations of 1875 or otherwise?

SIR E. GREY: The right of foreigners to visit all parts of the Turkish Empire under the provisions of the Capitulations would not appear to affect the power claimed by every independent State of refusing to admit foreigners or allow them to travel when their presence may be considered by it to be contrary to the public interest or dangerous to order. It has, however, been pointed out to the Porte that the movements of unoffending British travellers should not be interfered with.

Mr. CHANNING asked whether the answer referred to the whole of Asia Minor or only to the villages of Susan.

Sir E. GREY said it referred to the whole of Asia Minor.

Mr. CHANNING: And to newspaper correspondents?

Sir E. GREY said he had already intimated in his answer that each independent State claimed the right to a certain discretion as to whether newspaper correspondents should be admitted or not.

THE TELEPHONE COMPANIES.

Captain BAGOT (Westmorland, Kendal): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he will place upon the Table of the House within a day or two Returns showing the earnings of the different telephone trunk wires for the past three years which he proposes to buy from the Telephone Companies, the price he intends to pay for them, and copies of the Reports of the Post Office experts on their condition and value?

Mr. J. W. BENN (Tower Hamlets, St. George's), also asked whether the signing of the agreement would not be postponed until the question of the municipalities obtaining licences was discussed in the House?

Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY: The valuation of the trunk wires of the Telephone Companies, which is now being proceeded with, will take some time to complete. I am, therefore, not in a position to furnish the hon. Member with information on this point. I have also no accurate information with respect to the earnings of those wires.

Mr. H. S. FOSTER (Suffolk, Lowestoft), asked whether the House would have an opportunity of discussing the question before the agreement was signed?

Mr. MORLEY said that hon. Members interested in the question would have an opportunity of balloting for a day to bring it forward.

Captain BAGOT and Mr. FOSTER asked the right hon. Gentleman whether he did not give a distinct promise to the House last Session that hon. Members should have an opportunity of discussing the matter?

Mr. MORLEY: I made no promise of that kind.

Mr. FOSTER asked whether the Government would give facilities to discuss the matter before the agreement was signed?

Mr. MORLEY said he was not prepared to answer that question.

In reply to Mr. A. C. MORTON.

Mr. MORLEY repeated that he made no promise that the signing of the agreement should be postponed until the question had been discussed in the House, and said he might remind the hon. Member that the agreement was in existence when he came into Office, and was not made by himself. The reason why he postponed the signing of the agreement last year was in order that the Session might be brought to a close.

LIGHT RAILWAYS IN IRELAND.

Mr. W. KENNY (Dublin, St. Stephen's Green): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, if he would state the circumstances which led to the withdrawal in the last Session of Parliament of the Government Bill for the Commutation of the Treasury Grant towards Light Railways in Ireland after it had passed the House of Commons?

Sir J. T. HIBBERT: The Government introduced the Bill for the Commutation of the Treasury Grants towards Light Railways in Ireland towards the end of last Session, thinking that it would be unopposed; but, on finding that it gave rise to considerable opposition in Ireland, they determined to withdraw it and re-introduce it early this Session, in order that neither side might complain that they had not been allowed a fair opportunity of expressing their views.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL asked when it was proposed to introduce the Bill.

Sir J. T. HIBBERT: It is intended to do some time before Easter, or as soon as possible.

THE CASE OF THOMAS WEIR.

Mr. H. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I beg to ask the Secretary of

State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the circumstances attending the death of Thomas Weir, an insane patient at the Holloway Sanatorium, Virginia Water, on the 30th September 1894, and to the opinion expressed by the coroner's jury that not sufficient medical supervision was exercised, and that the mechanical restraint was excessive and too long continued; and, whether he will order an Inquiry into the case?

*Mr. H. H. ASQUITH: My attention has been called to the circumstances in connection with the death of Thomas Weir, and I have given instructions for a special Inquiry to be held.

THE BAKEHOUSE QUESTION.

*Dr. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to a book lately issued by Drs. Waldo and Walsh on the Bakehouse Question; and, whether, in view of the facts and conclusions therein detailed, the Government will institute an official Inquiry into the matter?

Mr. H. H. ASQUITH: I have seen the book referred to. For some time past my attention has been given to this question. The law as to bakehouses is already very stringent, and in the Factory Bill which I hope to introduce I shall propose to strengthen some of its provisions. The evils of the present state of things arise, not so much from defects in the law as from its lax and unsystematic administration by the Local Sanitary Authorities. There is no need for any official Inquiry.

THE FROST AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.

Mr. L. H. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he can make any allowance for attendances on the part of children who, through the severity of the weather and the state of the roads, are, especially in the rural districts, unable to attend school at this season?

The VICE-PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Mr. A. H. D. Acland, York, W.R., Rotherham): I fear that no allowance can be made on account of lost attendances, because it is not possible to ascertain in each case the exact reason for absence, or to decide what actually constitutes inability to attend school. If allowance could be made for every day when weather was bad, the present system of giving grants on average attendance would become almost impossible. I can, however, perhaps meet the right hon. Gentleman in other ways, as many country schools at a time like this certainly need lenient treatment. In cases where schools have necessarily been closed in consequence of the severity of the weather, a proportionately smaller number of schools meetings than the 400 now required as a *minimum* is accepted as qualifying for the grant. But I will also instruct Her Majesty's Inspectors that, in assessing the grants, they should judge leniently schools now shortly to be inspected, whose efficiency has been temporarily impaired in consequence of irregular attendance caused by the recent inclement weather.

THE KING OF ASHANTI.

Mr. H. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether it is the fact that the King of Ashanti has expressed a desire to send an Embassy to England, and has sent messengers down to Cape Coast Castle with this object; and, whether it is a fact that Her Majesty's Government have informed the King that such an Embassy could not be received by Her Majesty the Queen; and, if so, on what grounds was the refusal based.

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar, E.): The King Kumasi—we do not admit his claim to the title of King of Ashanti—has sent certain messengers to Cape Coast Castle, who have stated that their instructions are to proceed to England to see Her Majesty the Queen. The Governor of the Gold Coast Colony has been instructed to inform them that any communications from the King of Kumasi must come through the Governor; and that if the messengers proceed to England they will not be received. The grounds upon which Her Majesty's Government have based these instructions are (1) that the King of

Kumasi is not a chief or ruler of sufficient importance to be allowed to send ambassadors to the Queen, and that, in accordance with custom, she can only treat with him through the Governor of the Gold Coast Colony, who is her representative; and (2) that, under any circumstances, Her Majesty could not receive a mission from a ruler who, there is good reason to believe, allows and countenances the practice of human sacrifices. I have to add that, under instructions from Her Majesty's Government, a message was sent to the King of Kumasi by the Governor some months ago requesting the King to accept a British Resident, and laying down certain conditions for the preservation of peace and the abolition of inhuman customs, but stating that his authority and independence would not be further interfered with.

POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANKS.

MR. R. W. HANBURY: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, the price of Consols having risen so much above par, the deposits in the Post Office Savings Banks now earn sufficient to pay the rate of interest to depositors hitherto paid and the expenses of management; and, if not, whether it is proposed to alter the rate of interest or to meet the difficulty in some other way.

THE MANAGEMENT OF SAVINGS BANKS.

THE HON. J. S. MONTAGU (Hants, New Forest): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the cost per cent. of management of the Savings Banks for every £100 of deposits; what is the loss, if any, on every £100 deposited in the Savings Banks at the present price of Consols; whether he proposes to take any steps to minimise the loss, if any, to the Exchequer; and what is the increase in the amount of deposits for the months of November and December 1894, compared with the same months in the previous year?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): I am informed by the National Debt Commissioners that the securities held by the National Debt Commissioners on account of deposits in Post Office Savings Banks have hitherto earned more than sufficient to pay the rate of interest to depositors in addition to the expenses of management; and though the price of Consols has risen to above par, it is not estimated that the expenses for the year to December 31, 1895, will exceed the income. But the margin would be extremely narrow, owing to the combined operation of the high price of Consols and the low interest upon Consols; and I propose to appoint a Departmental Committee to investigate this subject to see what can be done upon the matter. With regard to the question of the hon. Member for Limehouse, the figures are not yet sufficiently ascertained to state the cost of management per cent. The increase of receipts in Savings Banks in the months of November and December 1894, as compared with the corresponding months in 1893, was about £730,000.

MR. W. ST. JOHN BRODRICK (Surrey, Guildford): May I ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he sees any objection to granting a Select Committee of this House to inquire into the rate of interest, instead of a Departmental Committee?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I think that would not be at all desirable. The matter ought to be carefully and departmentally examined, and I do hope that nothing will be said here or elsewhere which will raise any doubt in the mind of the public on the subject of the solvency of the Savings Bank. I have every confidence that there is no foundation for any suspicion of the kind, and nothing could be more injurious than to disseminate in the minds of people, who have no means of judging in this matter, any notion that there was any doubt or hesitation about the perfect solvency of the Bank, and its ample means of meeting its liabilities.

THE FINANCE ACT AND MARRIED WOMEN.

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that Section 34, Sub-section (2) of the Finance Act, 1894, has been held by the Inland Revenue to exclude married women who are engaged in trade from the benefits granted to married women deriving incomes from any profession, employment, or vocation; whether he is aware that under this decision a married woman engaged as a typewriter gets the advantage which her sister engaged as a milliner or dressmaker does not; and whether he will take steps to remedy this inequality of treatment?

SIR W. HARCOURT: The Income Tax Act, 1842, in Section 100, draws a clear distinction between profits derived from any "trade, manufacture, adventure, or concern, in the nature of trade," upon profits derived from "professions, employments, or vocations." The relief given to married women by the Finance Act, 1894, is distinctly limited to the latter. I see no reason for making any alteration in the Act.

MR. BARTLEY: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether it was not certainly the understanding of the Committee, and the House, that in making the exemption no distinction would be made as regards the source from which married women derived their income, provided it was earned in some occupation; and is it wise to make a distinction in this way in regard to the small incomes of married women?

SIR W. HARCOURT: That matter raised in the latter question cannot be discussed in answer to a question. But as to the understanding, it was clearly in my mind that the exemption was only granted in respect of employment. The case that was specially put was that of a schoolmistress—that was the case on which the discussion turned. Therefore it was clearly in my mind that it was not intended to include women engaged in trade.

SCOTCH SEED POTATOES.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, if his Administration will take special precautions to insure that when Irish Unions buy Scotch potatoes this spring in Scotland, they will get Scotch seed grown in Scotland?

SIR G. O. TREVELYAN: An answer on this subject was given to the hon. and gallant Member in January 1891, by the Lord Advocate of the late Government. I can only endorse his statement—that there were no special precautions which can effectively be taken to meet the case. But I can assure the hon. Member that, upon sufficient evidence being produced, the Criminal Authorities in Scotland will do all in their power to stop so fraudulent a practice; and I trust that the Local Authorities in Ireland will communicate any information they may have in any particular case, and I will promise that it shall be promptly attended to. The Crown Office have been asked to state whether there were any cases in 1891 of the nature referred to brought under their notice.

SOLDIERS' UNCLAIMED BALANCES.

MR. J. HEYWOOD JOHNSTONE (Sussex, Horsham): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, if soldiers' balances unclaimed are advertised in any, and what, papers other than the *London Gazette*, and if he can make arrangements for advertising such balances from time to time in newspapers circulating in the regimental district within which soldiers whose balances are unclaimed are known to have enlisted, or in papers of more general circulation than the *London Gazette*?

***MR. H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN**: Soldiers' unclaimed balances are only advertised in the *London Gazette*, and stated in full detail in the monthly Army List; and lists of those pertaining to men of each district are posted at the district head-quarters. Formerly advertisements were inserted in local newspapers, but they produced so little result in proportion to the expense that the practice was discontinued. I may remind the hon. Member that these balances, when finally unclaimed, do not go to the Exchequer, but are applied, in accordance with the Regimental Debts Act, for the benefit of widows and families of soldiers dying on service.

FLOGGING IN THE INDIAN ARMY.

MR. R. W. HANBURY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India, whether he will lay upon the Table any communications that have passed between him and the Government of India, in consequence of his promise given on 16th April last year, on the subject of flogging in the Indian Army; and what steps, if any, have been taken to abolish flogging in the Indian Army, and thus remove the existing distinction in respect of liability to flogging between the Natives of India and all other of Her Majesty's soldiers, including the West India Regiments.

Mr. H. H. FOWLER : I addressed a despatch on this subject to the Government of India in May last, in fulfilment of my promise to which the hon. Member alludes. The question has been under consideration since then, and I believe that a despatch from the Government of India will probably arrive by next mail.

THE PACIFIC CABLE.

Sir G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, whether he can give the House any further information as to the projected telegraphic cable across the Pacific Ocean; and whether he can lay upon the Table any further Papers on the subject?

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON : Discussions and negotiations are in progress in relation to this line of cable, but it would not be in the public interest to enter into a detailed statement at this moment, nor, I fear, can I give any definite undertaking as to the time at which it will be possible to lay further Papers on the Table.

ALLEGED POISONING OF CATTLE.

Mr. T. M. HEALY : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that, on the evidence of the police and the analysis of Professor Tichborne, the Clare Presentment Sessions rejected the claim of Colonel O'Callaghan for the loss of 14 bullocks, alleged to have been poisoned in June last; that the police proved it was impossible that the cattle could have been maliciously tampered with, and the analyst's certificate showed that they died from eating water parsnip; that Colonel O'Callaghan's agent subsequently sent to another analyst specimens from the stomachs of the cattle without sealing the jars in the presence of the police; and that the second analyst then reported a trace of arsenic: whether he is also aware that the claim for compensation is now being renewed before the Clare Grand Jury, of which Colonel O'Callaghan has frequently been a member; and will the Government, in the interests of justice, take steps to have the police represented, and their analyst in attendance, when the claim is resisted on behalf of the ratepayers.

Mr. J. ROSS : May I ask you, Mr. Speaker, whether this Question is in order, on the ground that it contains one-sided highly-coloured statements of fact tending to prejudice the trial of pending proceedings?

*Mr. SPEAKER : I presume the hon. Gentleman who puts the Question makes himself responsible for the facts set forth in it.

Mr. W. REDMOND : May I ask the right hon. Gentleman in this connection, whether it is not a fact that some time ago, in the County of Clare, several men were prosecuted, and that it was found they themselves had committed the outrages for which they claimed compensation, and whether, in view of the fact that it frequently happened that these claims for compensation have been proved to be bogus claims, he will order the Authorities to watch these cases very carefully?

Mr. J. MORLEY : I am aware of what the hon. Member has stated, and I will watch the matter. It is a fact that at Presentment Sessions held at Tulla on the 6th November last, the claims of Colonel O'Callaghan, in respect of the alleged malicious poisoning of a number of cattle, were thrown out for want of sufficient evidence. The District Inspector of Constabulary attended the Sessions in order to afford such information as was in his possession as to these cases, and produced documentary evidence of the Reports made by the analysts who had been employed by Government to examine the viscera of the animals. Copies of these Reports have been supplied to Colonel O'Callaghan. The police will be in attendance at the renewed hearing of the claims before the Grand Jury, but Government has been advised that it would be inexpedient to send down the analyst unless his attendance is required by the Grand Jury.

MINING EXPLOSIVES.

Mr. S. WOODS : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he has been informed that the mining explosives experimental apparatus, owned by Messrs. Pearson and Knowles, colliery proprietors, Wigan, can be placed at the disposal of the Government free of all charge for testing explosives in the presence of coal-dust and fire damp; if so, will he appoint a Committee of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Mines and representatives of the Miners' Federation, with instructions to report on the different explosives at present used in coal mines, and particularly with regard to their safety in the non-ignition of coal-dust?

*MR. ASQUITH: I am not yet in a position to decide whether its shape or construction renders it suitable for testing explosives in general, but I will procure information upon this head, and consider the matter. At present the North of England Mining Association is making very elaborate and interesting experiments as to various explosives in which certain of the Inspectors are assisting. I propose introducing a Bill dealing with the question of explosions of coal-dust in mines at an early opportunity. I am informed that a gentleman connected with the Westphalite Explosive Syndicate called at the Home Office on February 12th and offered to place at my disposition the apparatus mentioned in the question, in which to show that this explosive would not ignite coal-dust.

THE UNEMPLOYED COMMITTEE.

MR. J. H. LEWIS: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Unemployed Committee will have power to consider and to report to the House upon the desirability of preventing the disfranchisement of those who have recently been deprived of employment through no fault of their own, and have in consequence been compelled to apply for parochial relief?

MR. KEIR HARDIE asked when the names of the Committee would be put on the Paper?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I hope the names will be put down to-night. I stated yesterday that I thought it very undesirable that the Committee should be involved in any questions of a political character, and that the matter of disqualification was one rather for the House than the Committee. My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Louth has already called attention to the clause inserted in the Poor Relief (Ireland) Bill, 1886, during the administration of the Member for Midlothian, to the following effect:—

> "No person shall be incapacitated from being registered or voting as a Parliamentary elector by reason of his receipt of relief under this Act."

THE IRISH FEE GRANT.

MR. E. F. VESEY KNOX: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he has been able to arrive at a conclusion as to whether, under the Education Act of 1892, the Irish Fee Grant, instead of being a fixed sum, should increase with the increase of the English grant, bearing to that grant the proportion of 9 to 80.

MR. J. MORLEY: The Treasury, on the representation of the Irish Government, have admitted the principle that, under the Education Act of 1892, the Irish Fee Grant, instead of being a fixed sum, should increase with the increase of the English grant, bearing to that grant the proportion of 9 to 80; and they have agreed to insert in the Estimate for the coming year the increased amount asked for by the Irish Education Commissioners.

INQUIRY AT BELFAST WORKHOUSE.

MR. M. M'CARTAN (Down, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, with reference to the recent Local Government Inquiry, at Belfast Workhouse, into the circumstances in connection with the admission and treatment of Hannah Bella Craig, who died there within a week of her admission; whether he will give the names of the claimants and the particulars of the amounts approved of by the Belfast Board of Guardians to be paid in respect of reporting, witnesses' expenses, fees, and otherwise in connection with this Inquiry?

MR. J. MORLEY: The items of information required by my hon. Friend are too numerous to read out to the House, but I shall be happy to let him have a statement of them in writing.

THE COMMAND OF TROOPS IN CASES OF RIOT.

SIR A. K. ROLLIT (Islington, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, whether any, and if so what, steps have been taken to make the Army Regulations in the command of troops, in case of riot, conform to the Law, as recommended by the Featherstone Commissioners and the Home Office Departmental Committee?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: Steps have been taken to revise the Queen's Regulations in accordance with the recommendations of the Committee, and the necessary Amendments will shortly appear in Army Crders.

SOUND SIGNALS IN FOG.

SIR D. CURRIE (Perthshire, W.): I beg to ask the right hon. the President of the Board of Trade a question of which I have given him private notice—namely, whether in view of the feeling and judgment evinced amongst shipowners, shipmasters, underwriters, pilots, and others connected with British Shipping, hostile to the application of the proposed Washington Regulations for fog-sound signals at sea, he will be pleased to appoint a Committee of Members of the House to receive and consider the arguments and evidence against these proposed Regulations which the Shipping interest desire to submit to the House of Commons.

MR. BRYCE: The matter to which my hon. Friend refers has, no doubt, a technical aspect; and I am quite willing that it should be sifted thoroughly to the bottom in any manner which would be satisfactory. If my hon. Friend will move for a Committee I shall not oppose it.

*MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): Is the House to understand that the right hon. Gentleman has receded from his previously expressed determination to carry into effect the Regulations issued by the Board?

MR. BRYCE: No, Sir; the House is to understand nothing of the kind.

*MR. BOWLES: Then what is the use of a Committee?

[No reply was given.]

SIR D. CURRIE: I beg to give notice that I will move for a Committee at an early date.

A RIFLE RANGE FOR SEAMEN.

ADMIRAL FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne): I beg to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty whether any steps have been taken to prepare a rifle range for the seamen training in the Gunnery School at Sheerness, for which purpose £1,000 was voted in last year's Naval Estimates, 1894–5; and, if not, whether the matter will be dealt with before the expiration of the financial year; whether he is aware that the Military rifle range at Gravesend, to which the seamen at Sheerness Gunnery School have hitherto been sent for their rifle practice, has been closed for conversion into a range for the magazine rifle till July next; and, whether he can state how the seamen are to be exercised in rifle practice under the circumstances without a rifle range?

MR. E. ROBERTSON: Steps have been taken for preparing a rifle range for the Gunnery School at Sheerness. The question was connected with the joint ownership of the land by the War Office and the Admiralty, which caused some delay. This has been now practically settled, and it is proposed to acquire the land very shortly. Information has been received of the proposed closing of the Military rifle range at Gravesend until June. The seamen, therefore, will not be able to fire at Sheerness for some three or four months. The question of whether they should carry out their rifle practice at some other port is under consideration.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO HER MAJESTY'S MOST GRACIOUS SPEECH.

MOTION FOR ADDRESS. ADJOURNED DEBATE.

[Order read for resuming Debate on Mr. Clancy's Amendment to Address, 13 February, see page 643.]

Debate resumed by—

MR. BODKIN (Roscommon, N.), who said that he proposed to move a short Amendment to the Amendment. It was to add to it the following words:—

"Having special regard to the extent of the penalties provided by more recent legislation for the specific offences of which these prisoners were convicted; and also to the sentences actually imposed in several cases of a similar kind."

He thought that that Amendment embodied the strongest and most unanswerable part of the claim made by the hon. Member for Dublin County, and it was to that part of the claim to which the Home Secretary had given the most insufficient answer. Having justified the heavy sentences passed upon these men, on the ground that they were political prisoners, the Home Secretary could not then turn round and say that they were not political prisoners. His view was that these men were political prisoners, and it was upon that ground that he presented his arguments to the Home Secretary. On that point the right hon. Gentleman had given no answer, and when the Home Secretary gave no answer to an argument, it might be taken to be the case, that, to give an answer, was impossible. His contention was, that it was the motive, and the motive alone, that made a political offence. He was willing in this case to take the Home Secretary on his own ground. He was willing to assume that these men were not political offenders. If they were not, what else could they be but offenders under the Explosives Act? If they were merely treated as offenders under that Act, then he was entitled to say that they should not have received any heavier sentence than could be given under the Explosives Act, and the Home Secretary was not entitled to say that they should receive the maximum sentence that could be awarded to political offenders. These men had already suffered 12 or 13 years of the maximum penalty, while in the Walsall cases the sentences were only ten or five years' penal servitude. In the majority of the cases, the non-political cases they were discussing, no explosives were found on the persons of the prisoners. This was an unanswerable argument, which had been urged in the absence of the Home Secretary, and one to which no answer had been attempted. If it was admitted that the offences of these men were non-political, the Home Secretary was not entitled to say that they were tried under a political Statute which authorised the passing of higher sentences than the non-political Statute. At any rate, if these non-political offenders had received the *maximum* penalty, no one could deny that on that account they were entitled to the merciful consideration of the Crown. In one of these cases the clemency of the Crown was actually exercised. In Egan's case the sentence was commuted because it was a political offence. He pressed the Home Secretary to say that these non-political offenders should not be treated with more harshness than other non-political offenders. This was a demand for mere justice, which ought not to be denied by the Home Secretary to the practically unanimous voice of the Irish Members and the almost unanimous opinion of Ireland. He believed his Amendment had the hearty approval of many supporters of the Government, who would be only too glad to be able to vote for it. Already some of the supporters of the Government had raised their voices on behalf of these prisoners, and apparently none desired to say a word against the claim made for them. He did not desire to introduce any irritating topic into the appeal he was making, but for himself he must say he did not endorse the discreditable suggestion of the hon. and learned Member for Plymouth (Sir E. Clarke), that the Chief Secretary gave or intended to give any pledge in the matter. In that insinuation he did not join, and he did not believe the words were capable of the interpretation put upon them. No intelligent or honest man could say the Chief Secretary intended to include the men who were in prison in the description he gave of men—

"Whose only fault has been that they have used their talents for the benefit of their country, who have done the best they could, and have done much, to raise up the oppressed, miserable, and down-trodden people of their country."

He was speaking on behalf of trusted leaders, of whom he might say there was not a word in that description of which they would be ashamed, or need be anxious to repudiate. It was further to be remarked that the Chief Secretary spoke, not only of an Amnesty from England to Ireland, but also of a return Amnesty from Ireland to England. On the plain ground of undeniable justice, he appealed to the Home Secretary, if he insisted that these men were not political prisoners, to treat them no worse than other non-political prisoners convicted of similar offences. He concluded by moving the Amendment.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): I have nothing to complain of in the tone of the hon. Member who has moved the Amendment. The hon. Member did justice to the Chief Secretary for Ireland in repudiating the charge which the hon. and learned Member for Plymouth (Sir E. Clarke) endeavoured to fasten upon him of having given a pledge upon this subject; and I will say no more upon that subject. I must, however, protest against his proceeding of moving Amendment upon Amendment, as if we had not enough Amendments already upon the Paper to make almost impossible the conduct of public business in this House. If, when you have had an Amendment placed upon the Paper, and a whole day given to the discussion of the subject, you are to have the matter renewed by another Amendment put down upon that Amendment, all I can say is, being the person unfortunately responsible for the conduct of Public Business in this House, the conduct of Public Business is absolutely impossible under circumstances of that character. Since the topic arose, it has been a prominent one on these occasions; and it has been discussed over and over again. It has been said that these men must either be political prisoners or they are not—that their offences are either ordinary offences, offences against the ordinary law, or else that they are distinctly political offences. We have answered that over and over again. There is no reason whatever, because there is superadded to this crime of treason the crime of murder, that you should make a distinction between the two in these cases. When the celebrated historical character attempted to blow up the Houses of Parliament the question was not raised whether it was a political offence or an offence against the ordinary law. It was regarded as an offence against both. The House has heard this matter over and over again, and the Amendment does not introduce any fresh considerations into the Debate. I recognise the strong feeling and profound conviction which gentlemen opposite had on this matter. The responsibility, not of one Government but of all Governments who have had to deal with the question, is a very heavy and painful responsibility. No man who had not himself undergone the burden can understand what is the weight of the responsibility, which rests on one who has to dispense the prerogative of the mercy of the Crown. It is the heaviest responsibility that could be cast on any human being. I believe that the men who successively have had that burden imposed upon them had endeavoured to discharge it with a deep sense of their responsibility and with the knowledge that they must answer for it. This is no new question. The Government have been obliged to make their decision, and they had made it upon due deliberation and as hon. Gentlemen opposite will believe, with no leanings against mercy. I venture to say that no Home Secretary has any other than an inclination towards mercy whenever he feels his duty allows him to exercise it; but, having made that decision on the responsibility which is cast upon him, the House cannot expect that the Government should shrink from that decision. The hon. Gentleman was kind enough to say that this Motion was couched in a form which was a vote of censure on the Government. There is no doubt at all about the matter. It is a vote of censure on a decision the Government have taken, not once, but over and over again, and I am afraid that all I am in a position to do is to appeal to hon. Gentlemen opposite that, having stated very fully their case, not only this year but in previous years, they will allow the House to come to a decision on a matter which invites their decision and which, in my opinion, has been amply and fully discussed.

MR. T. SEXTON (Kerry, N.) said the Chancellor of the Exchequer misapprehended the object of the Amendment. It was not the purpose of the Irish Members to renew the subject of Amnesty or even unduly to prolong this Debate. Their desire was to place on record their view that the sentences of these prisoners should be considered in the sense of the parity that they bore to sentences passed on other persons for similar offences. When he moved the adjournment yesterday, the right hon. Gentleman described the Amendment as a vote of non-confidence of the most decisive kind. Now, he desired to make it clear, in supporting the Amendment, that he regarded it in no such light. He felt much confidence in the present Government in matters of vital and supreme concern to his country. Confidence in politics was rarely absent, but when he compared this Government with the only other Government that could possibly succeed it, his confidence in it was large and comprehensive indeed. In his humble advocacy of the plea put forth in the Amendment he had no thought of want of confidence in the Government. His support of the Amendment was proof of his confidence in them. If he had no confidence in them he would not press the Amendment on their notice; but he pressed it because he felt they were disposed to listen to reasonable argument and to give reasonable argument firm consideration. The Home Secretary admitted that he considered these cases every ten years. He gathered from that that he considered them in 1893. A considerable time had now elapsed, and the principles and motives which should guide a Home Secretary in each future consideration were affected by lapse of time. The function of the Home Secretary was greater and, beyond comparison, higher than that of any jury or Judge. The jury were bound by the evidence; the Judge was limited by the law. The right hon. Gentleman was placed over Judge and Jury, and held his office with all its powers, including the prerogative of mercy, by the confidence of the House, and was not only entitled, but bound, in cases of this kind, to have regard not only to questions of guilt or innocence or the parity of sentences, but also to the lapse of time, the growth of public feeling and opinion, and even, in certain cases, to a course of policy, and especially to the opinion of those from whose confidence he derived his office and all the powers appurtenant to it. (*Opposition Laughter.*) If the jocular gentleman who laughed got into office and any question of the exercise of the prerogative of mercy should arise, would it be the duty of their Home Secretary to be indifferent to the expression of their opinion? A new situation, as regarded the political prisoners, was created on the previous day. Only one Tory Member took part in the discussion, though the late Home Secretary was present throughout on the front Opposition Bench and said nothing. No less than five Liberal Members spoke in favour of Amnesty, two of them lawyers, and four of the five were in favour of Amnesty without any qualification whatever. Therefore, he contended that, so far from suggesting any idea of no confidence, the Amendment merely put forward a plea that in the time that had elapsed since these cases were last considered circumstances had arisen entitling them to press for a new consideration. The question whether these were political crimes or not had been left more obscure than ever by the speech of the Leader of the House. The Home Secretary said they were not political, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer seemed to think they were. It would be more profitable to consider the course of the Liberal Government when these cases arose and their policy since, and to ask whether their policy since did not impose upon them some responsibility. These cases arose in 1883. There was a fever of excitement and deep indignation and apprehension in the country, and under the influence of this the Explosives Act of 1883 was passed. Such was the state of public feeling that the right hon. Gentleman's Bill, without Amendment and Debate, was passed in a single Sitting of the House. The Bill was not even amended in the House of Lords. After the right hon. Gentleman had himself passed a Bill intended to meet these cases, would not any one be justified in assuming, before the trials came on, that they would be conducted in accordance with the Act passed to deal with the case? But the prisoners were tried under the Explosives Act and sentenced under the Treason Felony Act. Why were they sentenced under that Act? Because they were Irishmen, and it was held that their criminal acts or criminal intentions were consequently due to resentment against the Government in Ireland. There had been other cases of having explosives in possession, and of conspiring to use explosives; but no other case had been tried under any other Act than the Explosives Act. The aggravating cause for the Government lay in the fact that the maximum sentence which could have been imposed upon these men under the Explosives Act for anything proved in evidence would have been 20 years' penal servitude for three of the men—a sentence which the prison system would have reduced to 15 years—and 14 years' penal servitude for the rest, which was actually equivalent to 10 years and a half. But the Government of that day put into the indictment under the Explosives Act a clause under the Treason Felony Act, which enabled them to intimate to the Judge, through their prosecuting counsel, that the maximum sentence under the Explosives Act was not sufficient—a suggestion more direct than any which an Executive ought to make to some one in a judicial position.

Sir H. JAMES (Bury, Lancashire): Will the hon. Gentleman state in what case that occurred? I was prosecuting.

Mr. SEXTON: These sentences are all sentences for life.

Sir H. JAMES: The hon. Member stated that application was made to the Judge that the sentence under one Act was not sufficient—that he should impose a higher sentence than the maximum under the Explosives Act. Will he state in which case that occurred?

Mr. SEXTON: The right hon. Gentleman has misapprehended my words. I did not speak of an application to the Judge. I spoke of an intimation or suggestion. My point is this—that if the Government had been content to proceed under the Explosives Act, the highest sentence which the Judge could have inflicted would have been 20 years in three cases, and 14 years in the rest. But as the Government brought in the Treason Felony Act, they thereby suggested to the Judge that the maximum sentence under the Explosives Act was not sufficient to meet the case; and that the Treason Felony Act was introduced into the indictment to secure a sentence for life. Continuing, the hon. Member said that that was scarcely a straightforward act of the Law. Immediately after the House had passed an Act specifically dealing with such cases, it was severe and rigorous in the extreme to go beyond that Act, and back a generation, to an Act of 1848, passed for the purpose of relieving the British Government of the odium of punishing treasonable acts in Ireland by death, by imposing a penalty just short of death. That Act of 1848 was passed at a time when Ireland had no independent and efficient representation in the House of Commons, and when the Liberal Party was still wedded to the policy of Coercion. All that had happened in the sphere of political policy since these trials were held imposed on the Liberal Party an unquestionable responsibility to review them. It was not unnatural in 1883—it was intelligent and perhaps consistent with the view held at that time, that the only way to rule Ireland was by means of a British Delegate armed with a Coercion Act—that, in order to strike at what the Government believed to be the political acts of felony, they should seize the sharpest weapon in the armoury of the Statute Book. But, in 1886, the Liberal Party adopted the policy of Home Rule for Ireland. In 1892 that policy was ratified by the electors. In 1893 a Bill to establish a Parliament in Ireland was adopted by the House of Commons; and from that moment forward a responsibility fell upon the Liberal Party which they could not ignore. Reference had been made to certain language used by the Chief Secretary before the Election. The right hon. Gentleman meant to convey that an Amnesty of this kind would form a proper part of the grant of Home Rule to Ireland and a settlement of the national question. [Mr. Morley nodded assent.] What was the logical consequence? The electors sent the Government to Parliament to grant Home Rule to Ireland; and a Bill for that purpose passed the House of Commons. And why was that Bill not law now? Why had not Ireland a Parliament and an Executive of its own last year? Why was this Amnesty, as a part of Home Rule, not granted last year? Because the House of Lords rejected the Bill. The Government resented the action of the Lords in the legislative sphere, and were about to appeal to the electors of the country to declare that, when the Commons had determined that a Bill should pass, the Lords should not prevent it from passing. But though the Government had to put up with the action of the Lords in the legislative sphere, there was another sphere in which the Government were free—the sphere of executive action; and if they sincerely resented the action of the Lords in the legislative sphere, they were bound to show their resentment by using their power in the executive sphere. As the only reason why this Amnesty had not been granted was, that the Lords rejected the Home Rule Bill, it logically followed that the Chief Secretary and the Home Secretary were surrendering into the House of Lords the exercise of the prerogative of mercy. That was a position the Liberal electors, who were to be called upon to condemn the action of the House of Lords, would not aprove. He did not maintain the guilt or innocence of the prisoners, but he did not forget that some of the cases must for ever be tainted with suspicion. There was evidence, amounting to presumption, that some of the prisoners were tempted by agents of the State. That was the opinion of a most experienced officer. It was notorious that the trials were conducted at a time of high excitement, when anger was not unnaturally deep, and that feeling must have operated with prosecuting counsel, witnesses, juries, and Judges to such an extent as to render the impartial administration of justice difficult, if not impossible. It was only necessary to ask now that these men should not, because they were Irishmen, be subjected to a heavier punishment than would be inflicted on men of any other nationality for a similar offence. The Home Secrehad said in general terms, unsupported by argument, that these cases and the Walsall cases were dissimilar in weight of guilt. But the dissimilarity was not in the advantage of the Walsall cases. He was not aware of any evidence that these Irishmen intended to take life, though he would admit that their intentions, if carried out, might have resulted in the taking of life. In the Walsall case there was some intention to take life under circumstances amounting to general and indiscriminate slaughter. How would it be contended, therefore, when the position of these men before the law was precisely the same, that the guilt in the Walsall cases was lighter than in the others? If those cases were sufficiently punished by ten, seven, or five years, how could it be reasonably supposed that those Irishmen ought to be subjected to penal servitude? The Liberal Party, in view of their policy towards Ireland and their alliance with the Irish people, ought to be unwilling to lean any longer upon the effete Act of 1848, which justified the imprisonment of these men. What was the object of the right hon. Gentleman? He could understand him if it was intended to keep them in prison for their lives on the ground that, when once convicted of such an offence, they could not be trusted at liberty. That would be an intelligible, though a condemnable position. But that was not the attitude of the right hon. Gentleman. The prisoners were entitled to release at the end of 20 years; therefore the extreme limit of contention was this, that it was a case as between 12 and 20 years. They had suffered for 12 years; were they to suffer for 20 years? There were only two possible objects in keeping the men in prison; one or other must be the object of the Home Secretary. The one object was Punishment, and the other object was Prevention. Was the object of the right hon. Gentleman further punishment, and had the punishment up to the present been inadequate? It was very strange that the Walsall anarchists were punished by terms of imprisonment of ten, seven, or five years, while the Irish prisoners, for the same offence, were not sufficiently punished by 12 years. Was it not true to say that, because those men were Irishmen and there was a political character attached to their offence, they had suffered more in those 12 years than other men in 20 years? The other object was prevention. Did the right hon. Gentleman contend that they were less likely ever to commit crime again if he kept them in prison to the end of 20 years? Such an argument could not be maintained; and if further punishment was intended to deter those outside who were in sympathy with the prisoners, he asserted with the utmost confidence that there was an operation of grace more powerful than any operation of punitive law. If the Home Secretary released these men at the request of the representatives of Ireland—a request founded on no sympathy with crime, and in no forgetfulness of the tragic consequences that might have followed from those acts for which the prisoners were tried, but founded on the interests of the commonwealth in the highest sense—he should say that the greatest good would be effected by a policy of clemency. The prisoners had already suffered a longer imprisonment than the highest sentence that could be inflicted on them under the Explosives Act, and he therefore submitted that a case for reconsideration had arisen. While expressing on matters of general policy confidence in the Government, and as being disposed to regard them in this case also as entitled to confidence, he pressed upon Ministers the consideration that no public interest would be damaged, but, on the contrary, the greatest interest of the community—peace, and order, and respect for law—would be considerably preserved by a release of the prisoners for whom the Irish Members now pleaded.

Mr. R. WALLACE (Edinburgh, E.) said, that he intended to vote with the hon. Members for Ireland and against the Government. This Amendment had been made a subject of confidence by the Government, and he desired to clear up his position in the matter. He thought that the turning of an adverse Vote on this question into a Vote of Censure on the Government was not worthy of them. He could not understand any rational justification for such a position. He supposed the Chancellor of the Exchequer would plead that it was an old tradition that a Vote against the Government on the Address was to be accepted as a Vote of Censure. He ventured to say that this was a piece of antiquated nonsense. He imagined that the practice had come down from the days of Sir Robert Walpole; but the Parliamentary promulgator of graduated taxation at the end of this century might easily have undertaken the not very difficult duty of brushing aside the cobwebs left by Sir Robert Walpole.

Sir W. HARCOURT: On the contrary, I wish he was here.

Mr. R. WALLACE thought, at any rate, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer might have detached his mind from the traditional formalities connected with this question, and that he might have devoted it to the centre and substance of the matter. Were the expected supporters of the Government to be tied down in the way in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer, by his utterances, proposed that they should be? It came to this—unless the supporters of the Government were on every minute point to come to heel they must run the risk of being dismissed to go before the country. He desired, however, to set the matter in the light of public interests. Was it right and proper that a great Administration should be prepared to throw up its great power for usefulness all over the country, and for a very considerable period of time in prospect, merely on a matter of petty administration? A Government that went out of power in a pet, because its own supporters or the House of Commons offered advice differing from the view which it entertained itself on a point of mere administration, deserved to be censured. Years ago he had voted with his hon. Friends on this question, and he had seen no reason to reverse the opinion then arrived at. The prisoners had certainly expiated whatever crimes they had been guilty of; and, in addition to that, he had since seen a more clear and more full indication of the National sentiment of Ireland on the question. One other important event had happened since that time, and that was the enunciation of certain large principles with regard to Amnesty, both in speech and writing, by the Chief Secretary. The Leinster Hall speech justified the vote he was about to give. The Chief Secretary had no right to limit the application of his principles in any arbitrary way he pleased. The Chief Secretary was master of his own mind, but he was not master of deductive logic. Extracts from the Leinster Hall speech were quoted yesterday, and in that speech the Chief Secretary practically pledged the Government to give an Amnesty to these prisoners whenever Home Rule was granted to Ireland. He drew two inferences; the first was, that these prisoners were political prisoners. If not, why should they be amnestied on a political occasion? Did the Chief Secretary propose to amnesty the murderers, the thieves, and the rogues in Ireland? He drew the further inference that it was not a question of abstract justice. It was simply a principle of political expediency. If not, Government would not make time a part of the contract, If Home Rule had been carried eighteen months ago, these men would have been amnestied. If Home Rule was not passed for 20 years, they would remain in prison. Was there a principle of abstract justice there? If it was a question of expediency, it might be expedient to grant Amnesty now. The Irish people were to get not merely the haunch of venison, but the trimmings into the bargain; and they said, as they could not get the haunch of venison: "Give us the trimmings." They asked for something on account. He said that was a very justifiable request. He thought the Chief Secretary might grant the request of the Irish people, and release the so-called dynamite prisoners. He should call them political prisoners. From what he knew of the nature of the Irish people he was sure they would feel far more grateful for the contingent than for the postponed mercy.

*MR. HENRY MATTHEWS (Birmingham, E.) said, he should not enter into the domestic quarrels of the Party opposite. He should leave them to settle that themselves. He noticed, however, that the Members opposite who supported the Irish Members had a large Irish element in their constituencies. If the Chief Secretary were understood to have said that the Amnesty of these prisoners depended upon the contingency of the Home Rule Bill passing, all he could say was that, he entered his most solemn protest against such doctrine as that. He should not dwell on the arguments of the hon. Member for Kerry, but he ventured to say that the reasons which guided the Home Secretary in his conduct in this matter deserved the full approval of that House. He thought the right hon. Gentleman laid down the true principle. Of course, the lapse of time must influence the judgment of any man. The physical circumstances of a prisoner must also be taken into account. The Member for Kerry suggested that these men should be released because public opinion in Ireland was in favour of it. He did not wish to say anything harsh, but he could not shut his eyes to this—that the public feeling in Ireland was not altogether sound on this subject. There was a morbid feeling to sympathise with those who fell under the lash of the English law. He could understand the feeling. He did not believe that in reality the Irish people sympathised with the perpetrators of abominable offences; but, on the other hand, there was a national disposition to sympathise with any one sentenced by the English Courts. Many of these prisoners did cause explosions, and the penalty for that offence under the Explosives Act was penal servitude for life. The blowing up of stations in London, the Tower explosion, and the explosion near the gasworks in Glasgow were cases in which explosions actually occurred. The offences for which penalties of terms of years were provided were much vaguer and lighter than those brought home to these prisoners. Was it possible to doubt that in all these cases explosions were intended? The explosives were in the possession of these persons, and, where explosions did not actually occur, it was the sagacity of the police that prevented them. The offence for which a penalty of 14 years was provided was for having explosives in possession, unless proof of innocent possession were forthcoming. While admitting that the penalties in the Explosives Act were of a somewhat savage character, he thought that the analogy of that Act could not be urged as a sound argument that the sentences in these cases were excessive. He supposed it would be in vain to suggest that no possible good could be done by this discussion. He could not imagine how it could conduce to any good to invite the House to remember all the circumstances that were proved in evidence against many of these men, but he was quite certain that everything that was necessary to the due administration of justice the Home Secretary would take into account.

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford) remarked, that he did not know that any useful object would be served by prolonging the Debate, but he desired to offer one or two observations before they proceeded to a Division, if the House would permit. On former occasions, when this subject was discussed, he dealt not only with the general arguments, but went into detailed accounts of the circumstances of many of these men. It would, he felt, be out of place to enter into a detailed examination of their cases upon the present occasion. The last speaker had, however, attempted to induce the House to believe that the analogy between the Walsall cases and some of these men told rather against the Irish prisoners than in their favour. But, taking the case of John Daly, for example, he was not tried for having caused an explosion or for connection with any explosion. He was tried for being in possession of explosives, which he could not satisfactorily account for. The Walsall men were tried for exactly the same offence; but, whereas Daly to the last protested his innocence and evidence had since been produced by the Chief Constable of Birmingham that the explosives were planted upon him by an agent of the police, the Walsall men stood up in the dock and stated that in their case they had the explosives in their possession for the purpose of bringing about explosions; and one piece of evidence in their case was, that a document was found upon one of them showing that explosions were intended. Yet in Daly's case the sentence was for life, while the Walsall men only got terms of years. From the remarks of the Home Secretary he gathered that the right hon. Gentleman was of opinion that it would not be altogether unfair if in the case of Daly the sentence were to be treated as a sentence of 20 years' penal servitude under the Explosives Act. That was an enormous advance to have secured, inasmuch as Daly's sentence would then in the ordinary course be remitted at the end of 15 years from the date of the sentence. Pushing that argument a little further, he would remind the House that all these men in Portland Prison were suffering life sentence. They were not all guilty in the same degree. Some were intelligent men, while others were illiterate and the dupes of others. If Daly, under the Explosives Act, ought only to have received 20 years, it followed as a matter of course that it would be fair to reconsider the sentences on other men. Sentences of 14 years under the Explosives Act would amount to something like 10½ years in prison. The men whose cause was now pleaded had already been in prison over 12 years. He wished to press that point. He congratulated his hon. Friend on having initiated the most useful Debate on the Amnesty question that had yet been heard in the House. It was clear that the movement in favour of Amnesty was advancing rapidly. He regretted that the Leader of the House had, on the previous afternoon, and again that evening, tried to invest the Amendment with the significance of a Vote of Censure on the Government. The plain meaning of the right hon. Gentleman's remarks was, to try and induce those hon. Members behind him who were convinced of the justice of the demand for Amnesty to vote with the Government, or at least to abstain from voting in favour of the Amendment. He appealed to those hon. Members not to allow themselves to be driven out of the Lobby through fear that they might be imperilling the position of the Government, who were sure of a large majority that evening. In voting for this Amendment hon. Members would be strengthening the appeal for Amnesty, would be showing to the people of Ireland a conviction in the justice of the case, and would be doing a good work for the future peace of Ireland and for the establishment of better relations between that country and Great Britain by advancing still further the plea for Amnesty, and bringing about the ultimate release of these unfortunate men.

Mr. A. ILLINGWORTH (Bradford, W.) said, it would have been impossible for any Home Secretary, after the passing of a Home Rule measure, to have kept these men in prison, as their offence was a political offence, and their Amnesty would be an inevitable corollary of such a measure. It was not a question of principle, as the Home Secretary had himself intimated that there would come a time when these men might receive a commutation of their sentences. If it were granted that the time these men had been in prison was ample punishment, the only question remaining for consideration was, what was the state of the public mind? He thought everything pointed to a change amounting to a revolution in the disposition of the Irish people towards the English Government, and of the English people towards the Irish people. That being the case, he saw no reason why an early Amnesty should not be granted, and the fact that they had failed to secure Home Rule to the Irish promptly was an overpowering reason why the Home Secretary should release these men.

Mr. T. LOUGH (Islington, W.) thought that full justice had not been paid in the Debate to the speech of the Home Secretary, which was couched in very different language from that which he had made two years ago. Unfortunately, immediately after the right hon. Gentleman sat down a personal altercation between the Chief Secretary for Ireland and the hon. and learned Member for Plymouth arose, and this incident had occupied much of their time, and had, he thought, thrown more acidity into the Debate. The Home Secretary had been good enough to say that he would be glad to consult the Judge who had sentenced these men in regard to certain points that had been raised, and he hoped that the right hon. Gentleman would promise the House that this conference with the Judge should take place on an early occasion, and that he would then take into account the various points points raised in the Debate.

Amendment to the proposed Amendment agreed to.

*MR. SPEAKER : I am told that the Division bells are out of order, but as no experiment has been tried it is uncertain whether they are so or not. Assuming that they are, the Serjeant-at-Arms has given directions to the police and the messengers to convey the information to all parts of the House, and I hope the House will suffer no inconvenience.

The House divided on the Amendment as amended :—Ayes, 111 ; Noes, 299.—(Division List, No. 5.)

THE APPOINTMENT OF COUNTY MAGISTRATES.

MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough) moved as an Amendment to the Address ,—

> "And we humbly express our regret that Your Majesty has been unable to inform this House that the Resolution of this House of the 5th of May 1893, relating to the appointment of County Magistrates, has been fully carried out by Your Majesty's present advisers."

He explained that the Resolution of May 5, 1893, declared that appointments of magistrates should no longer be made only on the recommendation of lords lieutenant. The Lord Chancellor, replying to a deputation before that Resolution was passed, said that if a Resolution of the kind were carried he would consider all nominations that might be sent to him, and make appointments without regard to the nominations of lords lieutenant. At least he was understood to say that. The Resolution was then carried by that House, but the grievance of which its supporters complained did not thereupon disappear, as they hoped it would. The present practice was this : when nominations for any district were made to the Lord Chancellor, he sent in the names of the parties to the lord lieutenant and endeavoured to induce him to nominate them. If the endeavour failed, nothing further was done. In fact he doubted whether the Lord Chancellor had really made any appointment without first getting the consent of the lord lieutenant. He had heard of one case in which an appointment had been made in final opposition to the Lord Lieutenant, and that one case proved the rule. At any rate, the Radical Party objected to the existing practice, under which the Lord Chancellor made the nomination to the Lord Lieutenant, and really claimed the credit of the appointment. Under that practice, too, active and vigorous Radicals were, as a rule, excluded as far as possible. What he wanted and sought by his Amendment, was some assurance from the Government that, in future nominations to the Bench, fair consideration should be given to qualified men of the Radical Party and to Nonconformists. They were perfectly content that the Lord Chancellor should make the fullest inquiries concerning the persons nominated, so long as those inquiries were not of a political character ; for Radicals were quite as anxious as the Lord Chancellor, or as Tories, that unfit persons should not be placed on the Bench ; and he believed there were very few cases of the kind on one side or the other. Only about 10 or 15 per cent. of the County Magistrates were Radicals or Nonconformists ; and that, he contended, was a most unfair proportion, for Radicals and Nonconformists had as much right to a share in the administration of the law of the country as Tories and Churchmen. The Lord Chancellor had admitted in a letter to an hon. Member that he had a difficulty in finding a sufficient number of Radical gentlemen in the counties who possessed the necessary qualification. He recognised that such a difficulty might exist ; but, at the same time, he thought more appointments of Radicals might be made than had been done. This property qualification handicapped the Party, and it ought to be abolished. He knew that the Government had promised to make an effort to do so, but time must be found for the purpose. In the meantime, however, something might be done to remedy the existing injustice. It might be said that Radicals and Nonconformists were not good enough for Justices of the Peace, but if they were good and strong enough to put a Government in power, and to appoint a Lord Chancellor, they ought certainly to be capable of filling the position of Magistrates. It was a curious state of things that, while a property qualification was required in England, none was necessary in either Scotland or Ireland. Why should this difference exist? Why should Radicals in England be thus handicapped? How would the argument with regard to the predominant partner apply in this matter? They did not expect that the discrepancy in the number of Tories and Radicals on the Bench could be at once redressed, but they did claim from the Government that, until the balance was to some extent corrected, Tories should be nominated to a much less extent than at present. As far as he had been able to ascertain, as many Tories as Radicals or Nonconformists had been nominated for the Bench since 1893, and that he urged was most unfair under the circumstances. He had no objection to Tories being appointed; all he claimed was that Radicals had a right to equal consideration. The demands on the time of the Government might be too heavy to enable them to properly deal with the question at the present moment; but, having admitted that the Radical Party were acting fairly and justly in this matter, it was their duty to assist them in their object as far as they could. It might be said that many of the Magistrates recently placed on the Bench had been appointed through the District Councils. To this he did not object, though the men appointed might be Tories, because they were practically elected by the people. He did not bring this matter forward by way of censure at all events on Members of the Government sitting in this House, but the present was the only opportunity open to him. He asked the Government, therefore, having regard to the rights of the Radical Party, and especially the Nonconformist Party, to do their best to see that the Crown carried out the Resolution of the 5th May, 1893, which they themselves on that day voted for.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT) said he had listened very carefully to his hon. Friend's speech, but he failed to appreciate what it was he charged the Government and the Lord Chancellor with. The Resolution to which he referred had been carried out in hundreds and thousands of cases, and, therefore, the complaint of the hon. Member fell to the ground. No doubt there had been a certain amount of disappointment where gentlemen had recommended a list, and the whole list had not been adopted. The truth, however, was, that a person in a responsible position like the Lord Chancellor, must make inquiries, and must be careful to satisfy himself as to the qualifications of those whom he placed on the Bench. The old system was, therefore, a bad one—as bad as it could possibly be. Some years ago he went into a certain county, which he would not name, and said to a fellow-traveller, "Do you think the Lord Lieutenant of this county would make me a Magistrate?" "I don't think he would," was the reply, "because he never made a Liberal a Magistrate in his life, and never will." The very last thing he ever desired was to be a Magistrate; he was not one, and never would be. He might mention, as a fact not generally known, that a man who was a Privy Councillor could swear himself in as a Magistrate at any time. That was a privilege he had never taken advantage of. He was quite sure the desire of the Lord Chancellor had been very largely to extend the limits of the appointments of the Magistrates, that there should be no distinction of creed in the matter, and that classes who had not been freely chosen in the past, should in future have a place on the Bench. A considerable number of artisans had been placed on the Bench with great advantage. Therefore it was not the case that the Resolution had not been acted upon, and it was being more fully acted upon every week and every month.

MR. CYRIL DODD (Essex, Maldon) thought the Chancellor of the Exchequer was mistaken when he informed the

House that artisans had been placed upon the County Bench. The Resolution dealt not with the Borough, but with the County Bench, and the reason why in England no artisans had been put on was that there was a property qualification, which practically closed the County Bench against working men. Nor could he admit that the Resolution of the House of Commons had been fully or adequately carried out, although it might be that sufficient time had not yet elapsed. He did not speak as having any personal grievance, because in the County of Essex, which he represented, no difficulty had been experienced in arriving at a list satisfactory to all parties. But, moving about the country a good deal, as he did, he found that a very considerable grievance existed. People had not been placed on the County Bench, for example, because they were Nonconformists. What it was hoped the Resolution would do, was this—that it would throw open the County Bench to men of all parties, and thereby to strengthen the sense of justice among all sections of the community. Instead of Magistrates being appointed by the Crown, on the nomination of the Lord Chancellor, Lord Chancellors had in latter days come to abandon this part of their duties, and the lord lieutenant of each County had practically become the arbiter of who should and who should not be on the Bench. The time had come when the whole subject must be considered. The Chairmen of District Councils became Magistrates during their year of office. At the end of that term they would come off the Commission of the Peace, and, in many cases, they could not be re-appointed unless the property qualification were abolished. All they desired at present, however, was to impress upon the Government that it was its duty to do the best in the present condition of the law, and to urge on the Lord Chancellor that he should not rest content with what he had done in some counties, but should endeavour more thoroughly to carry out the Resolution of the House. He did not ask that the Lord Chancellor should put as many Liberals as there were now Tories on the Bench; that would neither be possible nor desirable. But Liberals should no longer be debarred from serving their country as Magistrates simply because they were Liberals. It was unfortunate that there should be a feeling in the country that one Party was not being fully or fairly dealt with in the matter of the administration of justice. The House was concerned in seeing what effect was given to its Resolution. There were rumours of another Resolution, though he did not know when it was to be proposed. But, no doubt, it was a Resolution of the utmost importance. They wanted to know how Resolutions were carried out. The value of a Resolution depended on the force behind it. What was the force behind the Resolution with regard to the Magistrates? (An hon. MEMBER: "Very little.") It was the force of the Government who voted for it, and, as a supporter of that Government, he held that it was his duty to see that the Resolution was fully, fairly, and thoroughly carried out.

MR. MORTON said would not put the House to the trouble of a Division, but he hoped the Government would take into consideration the feelings of their own Party, and endeavour to carry out the Resolution of the House.

Amendment withdrawn.

THE MAAMTRASNA PRISONERS.

MR. T. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour) moved as an Amendment to the Address:—

> "And we humbly assure Your Majesty that the present peaceful condition of Ireland affords a fitting opportunity for an inquiry into the circumstances attending the trial and conviction of certain prisoners at present suffering penal servitude in Ireland, known as the Maamtrasna prisoners."

He said that this subject had been before the House on four or five different occasions. It affected not only the continued imprisonment of four men, suffering penal servitude in Ireland, but affected also the question of their guilt or innocence of the very abominable and the very heinous crime which was laid to their charge.

Attention having been called to the fact that there were not 40 Members present, the House was counted, and 40 Members being present—

MR. HARRINGTON, continuing, said, that, practically, all he asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland to do was to carry out a promise to institute an inquiry into those cases which was made by one of his predecessors in office on behalf of the Conservative Government a few years ago. When the attention of the House was first drawn to the question at the end of the Session of 1884, the Marquess of Hartington stated, on behalf of the then Liberal Government, that while they refrained from making an absolute promise that an Inquiry should be instituted, the Irish Government were prepared to receive any representation, and, if the facts were as alleged, an Inquiry should be granted. A partial Inquiry followed upon representations which were made by the Archbishop of Tuam and other eminent ecclesiastics, but he desired to impress on the House the fact that that Inquiry was only into part of the case, for the full facts could not at the time be laid before the Lord Lieutenant, who instituted the Inquiry. The Chief Secretary, in the course of his speech the other day, had expressed the opinion that the object of this Amendment was to discredit the Administration of Lord Spencer in Ireland. He hoped his words would entirely remove that erroneous impression from the mind of the right hon. Gentleman. No doubt, when the question was first raised in the House, the suspicion very naturally arose, owing to the acute friction between the Nationalist Members and the Liberal Government, that the object of it was to discredit Lord Spencer's Administration. But the suspicion was, even then, utterly unfounded; and now the section of Irish Nationalist to which he belonged would be the last to make any attack upon Lord Spencer. They felt indebted in the highest degree to Lord Spencer for the manner in which he advocated the right of the Irish people to self-government, and for the strength with which he had held to that opinion in spite of many discouragements and difficulties; but they were even more indebted to Lord Spencer because, when Mr. Parnell was being bitterly assailed, he was conspicuous among his colleagues for the generosity of his allusions to the late Irish Leader. The only desire he (Mr. Harrington) had in drawing attention to the cases of those four men, who, he believed in his inmost soul, were guiltless of the crime of which they had been convicted, was to have them restored to the bosoms of their families, whence they should never have been taken. In October 1884, on the occasion the Inquiry to which he had alluded was promised, a Debate, that lasted four days, took place, and because on that occasion some Conservative Members supported the demand for an investigation, the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary seemed to have got it into his head that the Motion was intended to discredit the Liberal Administration in Ireland. But he would remind the right hon. Gentleman that though it was quite true that the hon. and learned Member for Plymouth (Sir E. Clarke) supported the Motion on that occasion, the strongest speech in support of the Motion, and the speech of all the Debate that most carried conviction to the minds of all who heard the Debate, was made by the present Lord Chief Justice of England (Lord Russell) who was a supporter of the then Government, and, of course, had no Party interest to serve. Lord Russell said he felt the duty was cast upon him to support the Amendment; because, though he had first believed the men had been rightly convicted, that belief had been removed after hearing the case which he (Mr. Harrington) had laid before the House. The next occasion on which the question was raised was in July 1885, when a Conservative Government was in Office, and again the Conservative Members to whom the Chief Secretary had alluded supported the demand for an Inquiry. On that occasion the right hon. Member for Bristol (Sir M. Hicks-Beach) who was Chancellor of the Exchequer, said:—

> "The Lord Lieutenant has authorised me to state that if Memorials should be presented or statements made to him on behalf of those prisoners who are referred to in this Motion, they would be considered by him with the same personal attention which he would be bound to give to all cases, great or small, ordinary or exceptional, coming before him, with the earnest desire to carry into effect the requirement of justice."

No Memorial, so far as he knew, was then presented to the Lord Lieutenant by the friends of the prisoners. He did not think the duty was cast on him, having called attention to the matter in the House, to present a memorial to the Lord Lieutenant. Besides, the Conservative Government remained in office only a short time. There was then an interval of Liberal Government, followed by a long term of Conservative Government, during which it took all the efforts of the Irish Government to prevent the authorities from putting persons into prison, without giving them time to think of asking the Government to go back upon the cases of old prisoners. The crime of which the men had been convicted was a most abominable and heinous murder. On the night of August 17th, 1882, in a little glen on the borders of the Counties of Mayo and Galway, a poor humble family of small farmers, named Joyce, had their house broken into. The father, John Joyce, his wife, his mother an old woman over 80, and his daughter, were killed; and two other children were left in so precarious a condition that one died the next day and the other did not recover for a long time. The very enormity of the crime would dispel from the mind of every Member of the House the idea that there could be any sympathy with the crime or with the men who were guilty of it. There could be behind the demand for inquiry nothing but a desire to clear away the suspicion of unjust conviction. In drawing attention to the case of these prisoners he was drawing no distinction between the criminality of the man who actually committed the murder and that of the men who were accessory to it. If the inquiry he asked for did not clearly establish that the four men for whom he pleaded were in their beds, miles away from the scene of the murder when it was committed, and could have had no complicity with it, then he would admit that the verdict was perfectly just. Ten men were arrested for this abominable murder, and out of those ten men three had been executed and five still remained in gaol. These men were arrested on the information of Anthony Joyce, a cousin of the murdered man. Joyce was examined through an interpreter, as were all the witnesses in the case, being Irish-speaking peasants. He stated that when he had been in bed some time on the night of the murder he was aroused by the barking of dogs, and going to the door, with very few clothes on, saw six men whom he did not know at first. Next he went to the back and saw the men again, this time recognising them all. Four of them he had known from youth. He went to his brother's house, and brought out his brother and his brother's son. Together they followed the men across the river to the house of the murdered man. They saw some of the men enter the house, heard shouting and screaming, and then ran home. That was the story on which the prosecution proceeded. To credit that story one must believe that an Irish peasant, hearing six men passing his house at midnight, got out of his bed, and, partly undressed, followed those men first to his brother's house, and then a distance of three miles. He himself had been all over the ground, and he could assert that no impartial man would give the slightest credence to the story. At the trial an application was made for a new jury to go to the scene of the murder; but the application was refused. Had it been granted, not one of the men would have been convicted. The witness Anthony Joyce stated in the most distinct manner that he identified all the prisoners, and he was corroborated by his brother and his nephew. His brother actually added that the men wore dark clothes. The whole strength of the case for an inquiry rested on the overturning of this evidence, upon which the Crown rested their whole case. Three years after the trial the fact came out—a fact known at the time of the trial to the Crown counsel, but never produced by them—that the men who committed the murder were described by the two boys of the murdered man as having blacked faces and wearing white jackets. This was absolutely incompatible with the Crown evidence. Moreover, the men to whose guilt Anthony Joyce deposed were at enmity with him. One of them, Myles Joyce, had been quarrelling with him months before, and had only just been released from a month's imprisonment resulting from the quarrel. Two days after Anthony Joyce had given his information to the police, and before the Magistrate took his deposition, Sub-inspector Gibbons stated that he had six other men under arrest, and asked that they should be remanded for inquiries. Again, after an interval of six or seven days, Sub-inspector Gibbons applied for a further remand. If the Crown had placed the least reliance on Anthony Joyce's deposition—which was before them all this time—it would have been absurd to arrest six other men and to ask for a remand in order to inquire into their cases. During all that time not only had the Crown this man Joyce in charge, but they had actually in custody the ten prisoners subsequently put on their trial, while the story given by the Joyces was before them. What took place at the trial? These men were removed from the County Galway to be tried in the City of Dublin. They were all Irish-speaking peasants; not one of them except the young lad in gaol knew a word of English. The prisoners were taken to a place to be tried where all the difficulties presented in the course of the trial were practically as great as if they had been tried in a city on the Continent. Their Counsel did not understand a word of the language which the prisoners spoke; the Solicitor who was supposed to convey the instructions of these unfortunate men did not know a word of their language; not a man serving on the jury knew a word, and not a word which any of the jurors might say was known to them, and they had not the slightest conception of what might be said by the Judge. Upon the facts as presented to the jury he would have returned the same verdict; and he did not for a moment question the finding of the jury on the facts presented to them. But here was a fact which he was anxious to bring forward in order to show the difficulty in which these prisoners were placed. They were unable to present, even to their own Counsel, the conviction and the knowledge that they were innocent of this crime. To make the matter more ridiculous and difficult for them, the interpreter who acted between the Court and the prisoners was a policeman who knew the Irish language—Head Constable Evans. Before the case came on in Dublin, of the ten men in custody one acknowledged his guilt of the murder. It was needless for him to point out that, however doubtful the story of Anthony Joyce and his brother, however incredible to the minds of the jury if presented by Joyce alone, everything like a shadow of doubt with regard to the trial vanished; and when the case was so presented to the jury, with that man's corroboration, they could not have come to any other conclusion but that the murder had been committed as described; in fact, they were forced to believe the story. But what was the fact which he wanted the Chief Secretary to establish by his inquiry? It was that this man Anthony Joyce was so terrified, and so afraid of his life, though not within six miles of the murder at the time and had no cognisance of it, that when he had heard the story so often, and told against himself, he was constrained to say that he was guilty and that he was present. He knew how difficult it was to get a person to realise the fact that a man who had no participation in the murder and knew nothing about it, had no knowledge of it except that he heard the story told seven or eight times, was so weak and criminal that he stated the story told against him was true, and that he corroborated the story against the others in order to save his own life. That was the question which had complicated the whole case. A few days before the trial came on a second man made an attempt to save his life. One of the ten men charged who gave evidence, and who was not there, was a man named Anthony Philburn. Thomas Casey made an effort to save his life, and sent for Mr. George Bolton, the Crown Solicitor. Casey's contention was, that he was anxious to save his life and to give evidence, but that he wanted to tell the true facts and not the false story told by other witnesses. This man acknowledged his guilt now, and was prepared to go into any inquiry which the Chief Secretary was willing to institute. Nearly two years after this man had been sent to penal servitude, and after three of the prisoners had been executed, Casey came forward and made a public confession of his criminality in the church, in presence of the Archbishop of Tuam. He alleged that he first of all took part in the murder, and that he was, to some extent, responsible for the death of the three men who had been executed, because he gave evidence which led to their execution—evidence which was false. What was his story? His story was that, instead of ten men having taken part in the murder there were only seven. He was one of them; Michael Casey was another, and he supported Casey, stating, however, that the other four men in prison with them were perfectly innocent. Casey gave the names of the men who took part in the murder; three of them were still living in the district; they had not been brought to justice. Personally he had met these men; he had accused them of the murder; and he was convinced in his soul that they were guilty. Why had they not been punished? Because to take and punish them would be to expose the character of the entire proceedings on which the first men were hanged. Casey's story was, that of the men executed two were guilty, and one of them was innocent. Let the House look at the facts and see how Casey was corroborated. When Casey made that public confession he had absolutely no knowledge of some of the facts to which he had called the attention of the House. Two days previous to the execution of the three men found guilty at the trial, two of them, having no means of communication with one another, being in their condemned cells and guarded by warders night and day, were so oppressed in conscience at innocent men having to suffer for their crime that they sent first of all for the chaplain and then for the Governor of the gaol, stating that they wanted to make a statement as to the innocence of the third man. He did not know whether they did this on the same day, but the fact was, that the two men took the action he had described, and a Magistrate was sent for. He complained of the extraordinary fact that the same Magistrate was sent for who had practically been working up the case against the prisoners. This was a wretched and deplorable incident, calculated to check confidence in the administration of justice. The magistrate who attended the inquest, who worked up the case against the prisoners, and who entered the cells under the Court House to take the depositions of the informers, and their statements—the dying depositions of the boys being still suppressed—was the same man who was sent to take the depositions of the men in gaol, Mr. Newton Brady. This gentleman might be perfectly innocent of any intention to do anything but justice, but he maintained that the introduction of a different man, at all events at this stage of the inquiry, would have given the unfortunate men to be executed some better chance and a reasonable ray of hope. The depositions of the two boys were suppressed at the trial, and were never given to the counsel who defended the prisoner. Some of the men going to their dread account admitted their own guilt, but declared the innocence of others. When the Lord Lieutenant went to make inquiry, Mr. Brady was the gentleman to whom he intrusted that duty. He wished to make no allegations against Lord Spencer. Necessarily he had to use the men who knew the facts; but he might have placed the conduct of the inquiry in the hands of an independent person. If they believed the story of the prosecution they must admit that, not only were ten men concerned in the commission of this abominable crime, but four of them were first cousins of the man who was killed. The fact was, that in the murderers' party there was not one member of the Joyce family. The confession made by Casey was, that all those who took part in the murder were Caseys except one named Joyce, who was no relative. The hon. Member then read to the House the statements of Casey, the approver, and pointed to the curious fact that, while the families of the real murderers received money, the families of the innocent men, who had taken no part in the murder, never received a penny. In the course of the questions put to Thomas Casey when he made his statement, he alleged that he did not go into the house. The question was then put to him—

> "As you were the greatest stranger, why did they not press you, or why did you not go in yourself?"

He would invite the attention of the House to the following extraordinary answer:—

> "Sure they were all strangers, for they had blackened faces. I had only a soft hat tied down over my face. It was John Casey blackened them with polish blacking."

He pledged his word to the House that that was the first allegation of any kind that he received as to the fact that these men had blackened faces on the night the murder was committed. It was inconsistent with the story of the Crown. Nobody could doubt for a moment that the entire story, as told by the approver, would be absolutely inconsistent with the allegation that the men had blackened faces. But he would draw the attention of the House to an extraordinary corroboration of the story of Casey. At the trial he had heard nothing of any such allegation being made, and in the subsequent discussion in the newspapers, he never saw it suggested that the men who committed the murder had blackened faces; and when he heard of Casey's story, it seemed so to upset all his notions of the case as he had watched it, that he went down into the district to make inquiries, and to examine into it. The first person he met was a police constable to whom he said—

> "Is it not singular that these men had on no disguise of any kind when they committed the murder?"

"Oh!" said the constable "they had disguises." He then saw and spoke to the two boys Michael and Patrick Joyce, and they both told him that the murderers wore disguises. Now, if that were true, if there any weight in these statements, then the whole story presented by the Crown was absolutely false, and guilty and innocent alike were found guilty. A few days after this visit to the district, a legal gentleman, a friend of his, happening to have in his possession the briefs used by the Couusel for the Crown, sent them to him, and attached to them he found two remarkable depositions, which were never given to the Counsel who was responsible for the defence. To these declarations he would draw the attention of the House. The first was a declaration by Michael Joyce, the elder of the two boys, and it was headed—

> "Dying declaration of Michael Joyce, Maamtrasna, taken by A. N. Brady, R.M., on 18th August, 1882:—Two or three men came in. They had black on their faces. I did see my father and my brother killed. I am very sick. I cannot raise myself up. I was asleep when they came in. I heard the dog bark—my own dog. They said something to my father—I do not know what. I have no pain at all. I was at Mass yesterday at Finney. My name is Michael. John O'Brien told me not to tell, and Michael Malley. It was last night when they told me not to tell. They swore me on a book not to tell. It is John O'Brien of the Wood—I am sure of it."

That declaration was signed "A Newton Brady, R.M." From the beginning to the end of the trial no suggestion was ever made that that statement had been made by Michael Joyce. It was suggested that some statement was taken from the boy, but that he was rambling at the time, and that it could not be used. Appended to the statement were the following notes: "This has been found not to be a fact" (that the boy was at Mass at Finney the previous day). "These men"—(that was John O'Brien and Michael Malley)—"were arrested, but this was the only ground of suspicion against them. They were discharged." Those notes were signed "A. N. B.," and, because in the opinion of Mr. Newton Brady, the statement of the boy that he was at Mass the day preceding the murder, was not a fact, the whole of the deposition was kept out of the trial. The clergyman of the district wrote to him on November 3, 1884, upon the subject of the boy's condition. He said—

> "Brady, the doctor, and I arrived at the house of the murders almost at the same time. Brady was a little in advance, and insisted on taking the boys' depositions before I saw them—the boys. I was, of course, excluded from the house during the taking of the declarations, but the doctor was admitted. And whatever he may have sworn at the trials, he certainly did not appear to be clear on the day in question that Michael was raving. I asked him whether Michael was capable of making a declaration or not. He replied 'that he did not know, that he was not sure.' He said his reason for hesitating was Michael's statement about the Mass, observing that he had heard from Brady that there was no Mass in Finney on the 15th August. But when I assured the doctor that there was Mass, his opinion appeared to have undergone a decided change in favour of the belief that Michael was not raving. There is Mass generally in Finney only once a fortnight, and this accounts for the mistake Brady and the police fell into. They did not calculate for the holiday. My own opinion is, that Michael was not raving. When I saw him, he was weak and exhausted. So weak that he would speak only after a little pressure, and what he did say was perfectly rational and coherent."

To keep this boy's deposition out of the trial was, he declared, criminality of the deepest dye, which nobody could justify. The second of these boys also made a declaration, and certainly, anybody who saw the position it occupied in the Crown brief would know perfectly well, that it was intended that it should never be used at the trial. In that brief, the case that was to be presented by the Crown came first, then came the case prepared to meet any *alibis* that might be set up, then the depositions taken round the country, and at the end of all these the dying declarations of the boys Joyce. He would read the second declaration to the House: it was marked—

> "Dying declaration of Patrick Joyce, Maamtrasna, taken by A. N. Brady, R. M., at Maamtrasna, on 18th August 1882."

In this, which was supposed to be a dying declaration, Patrick Joyce said:—

> "I did not know anyone who came in. I would tell if I knew. Three men came in. It was near morning, . . . I did not hear any shots. I was struck on the head. I don't know who struck me. They were married men (grown-up men). They had soot on their faces. They had whiskers. They had bogdeal lights. They had a 'kippeen' each. They brought them inside the house. . . . . I think they had no coats, but 'bawueens.' They had three old hats."

The declaration was absolutely inconsistent with the story told at the trial; and the evidence of that boy would have completely broken down the case of the Crown. To withhold his evidence was to play with loaded dice. He invited special attention to the endorsement put upon the declaration by the Crown Solicitor—"Patrick Joyce has recovered, but his evidence is worthless." Was there ever anything more monstrous, unjust, iniquitous, or criminal than the appending of that note to the statement? No doubt the Crown Solicitor was entitled to make that comment if only he had handed the statement to the Counsel for the Defence so that they might have had an opportunity of seeing it; but to suggest to the prosecuting counsel that the evidence of the boy was worthless, and not to bring the deposition before the Counsel for the Defence was indeed playing with loaded dice. More shameful even than the suppression of that deposition was the conduct of the Crown towards that boy at the trial. It was known that he had recorded. Of course it was necessary to present him at the trial. According to the newspaper report, the boy was brought on the table and, through an interpreter, said that he did not know his catechism, nor was he aware what would happen if he told a lie. In these circumstances the Crown declined to examine him. He had been three months in the hands of the Crown, and in five minutes he might have been instructed as to the obligation of an oath, but he had been kept in ignorance for the sole purpose of suppressing his evidence and so not giving these men any chance of life. Whether these men were innocent or guilty—even if they were all guilty—the manner in which their trial was conducted was a scandal. There were various points in the evidence he should like to go over, but, as he was sure the Chief Secretary did not wish to ignore any part of the evidence, he would not labour those points. It was impossible to go through the evidence without realising strongly the inconsistencies in the evidence of the men who alleged that they were watching at a crucial time. It was suggestive to take the story of the brother Casey, to compare it with the story presented by the Crown, and with the defence that had been offered, in order to sustain the verdict arrived at on these trials. Casey's allegation was that he was willing to give the correct story of this murder, but that the Crown Solicitor would not take it because it did not corroborate another story. Casey said—

> "I told Mr. Bolton, when he went to the gaol, that I would tell the truth, that five were innocent, and three men who were out were guilty; but Mr. Bolton refused to take my statements or spare my life if I did not corroborate the story already given by those three men."

That allegation was made in the Memorandum published by the Lord Lieutenant when inquiry was asked for. An impartial examination would show that the Lord Lieutenant's Memorandum corroborated Casey's statement. Casey, in his statement, said—

> "The trial was to come off on Monday. I saw the Governor on Sunday evening, about four o'clock, and I was talking to him. I told him about my meeting with Mr. Bolton.

"Had you made up your mind this time to corroborate Philbin? I was making up my mind for it, but I was putting it off to the last moment. The Governor said to me if I wished he would speak to Mr. Bolton. I did not then give a decided answer.

"The next day was the day of the trial. When we were going into the van I saw Philbin going away in a cab. The other men went into the van. I was the last to go in, and I then said to the Governor that he might speak to Bolton. I had not given him an answer the night before. We were then brought to the court. The nine of us were in the room back of the dock, and my name was called. I don't remember the warder, but I think it was Moore, the same man that brought us to the chief warder. I was brought a few yards to the right, to a little room where Mr. Brady, Mr. Bolton, and the Governor of the jail were. Mr. Bolton was the first who spoke. He said, 'Now, Casey, are you going to make a statement?' He pulled out his watch, and said I had only a short time. I said, 'I'd like to give evidence fair.' He replied that I 'had only twenty minutes to consider my neck.'"

The allegation of Mr. Bolton was that he received the man's statement on the Saturday, that he told him he would produce him as a witness, and that his allegation that it was only on Monday he finally agreed to give evidence was absolutely untrue. Let the House consider whether it was probable that a man not going to take his trial would be taken down to the Court with other prisoners in the prison van, and not in a special carriage with another witness. Casey told Mr. Bolton what he could prove with reference to the murder, and it closely corresponded with his subsequent written statement. The allegation in Sir R. Hamilion's Memorandum was that Casey told a lie when he said that this was on the Monday, and that it was on the Saturday before that he was accepted as an approver, and told that they intended to examine him. The Memorandum said—

"This note was written by Casey, and handed by him to the Governor, with a request that he would have it sent to Mr. Bolton, and it was accordingly transmitted, and until the receipt of it Mr. Bolton had never spoken to the man, nor had he ever seen him except when brought up as a prisoner in Court. The Attorney General at the time was in London, and Mr. Bolton at once consulted the Counsel for the Prosecution, who directed him to see Casey, and be in a position to report to the Attorney General on his return what his evidence would be, but to take no statement, and hold out no hope to Casey that he would be accepted as an approver without the Attorney General's authority. Mr. Bolton thereupon went to the prison, and saw the prisoner, not in his cell, but in the Governor's office. The Governor was present at this interview, no other person being there, and it is untrue that Mr. Bolton used any threat to the prisoner, or made any suggestion to him as to what his evidence should be, or in any manner whatever pressed him. Mr. Bolton told him what he had been directed to tell him by the Crown Counsel, and Casey then told Mr. Bolton what he had to prove in reference to the murder, which closely corresponded with his subsequent written statement."

If Casey had consented on the Saturday to corroborate the story of the Crown, did anybody believe he would have been brought down with the other prisoners in the prison van as it was admitted that he was in the Memorandum? And why, when he had come down, should he have to send a message, as it was admitted that he did, to the Crown Prosecutor? No one would believe that if the Attorney General, on whom rested the responsibility for conducting the case, had had the statement of Casey on the Saturday, and intended to use it, he would have opened the case for the Crown without reference to it. He would have done nothing of the kind. He mentioned the evidence of the one approver, Philbin; but, beyond doubt, that statement was untrue, and the statement of the informer was untrue, and it was not until the Monday that he consented to corroborate the case for the Crown. It was borne out in a stronger manner still. After the trial had proceeded four or five days, attention was drawn to the fact that statements had been made by the two approvers, which should have been handed to the Counsel for the defence, but were not. At the trial of Myles Joyce his Counsel applied for a new jury. In the course of the discussion on the matter the Attorney General said—

"The conduct of juries in the past gives your Lordship and the public the greatest confidence in the jurors who will be called to try this case."

It was not the case that the two prisoners supplied information to the Government the day before the trial commenced. Sir R. Hamilton alleged in his pamphlet that Casey consented to become approver before the trial commenced, The Attorney General denied this. One prisoner did so before the trial commenced, and as soon as the Crown was in possession of the fact, no evidence was furnished to the other side. The other prisoner gave information while the trial was proceeding, and on the same day, as rapidly as possible, information was given to the other side. There was plenty of contradiction of the memorandum which alleged that Casey gave on the Saturday what he was going to prove, and that it closely corresponded with the evidence he gave at the trial. The Attorney General contradicted it, and showed that Casey did not make his statement until the trial was proceeding. He had already shown what was suppressed by the Crown at the trial. He had shown that they suppressed the dying declarations of the two boys, and that they were never handed to the Counsel for the defence. The Chief Secretary seemed to be under the impression that the taking of depositions in gaol in the presence of the accused was an act of mercy meant for the prisoner himself. The object of taking depositions in prison was, that if anything should happen to witnesses the depositions might be produced at the trial whatever might become of them. Philbin made two declarations in gaol. They were both absolutely contradictory of each other, yet neither was given to the Counsel for the defence. They were not brought to light until the Lord Lieutenant made the Memorandum he had spoken of. Sir R. Hamilton never knew, when he was giving them to the public, that they had been withheld from the Counsel for the defence. Counsel made an application that they should be given to him. The declarations would have completely shattered the case for the Crown. Never was more unfair dealing practised by the Crown than in this case. Let him recapitulate the facts. The dying declaration of Michael Joyce was never handed to Counsel for the defence of Patrick Joyce. The latter was himself withheld from examination at the trial, because it would have been impossible to have produced him on the table without his contradicting the whole story on which the plot of the Crown was laid. The deposition of Anthony Philbin was suppressed; and the deposition made by Casey in the gaol was never handed to the Counsel for the defence. In this latter deposition Casey, who was all along trying to bring in the real culprits, made the singular statement that there were two men, to whom he gave the fictitious names of Kelly and Neal, who met the others on the way. Yet no steps were taken by the Attorney General to have those two men brought to justice. He would like to impress on the Attorney General, that when the case came to be inquired into—and he had no doubt Lord Spencer inquired into it, with a desire to arrive at the truth of the case—Lord Spencer did not know, at that time, that it had been stated that the faces of those who committed the murder were blackened. This fact alone called for inquiry, which would show whether that statement were true or false. Moreover, when Casey made the confession, the Irish public had no knowledge whatever that the two men executed in Galway Gaol had made a declaration as to the innocence of the third man, Myles Joyce. The Memorandum of Sir Robert Hamilton threw out the suggestion that in asserting the innocence of Myles Joyce, a distinction was sought to be drawn between the man who actually committed the murder, and the men who were standing by, aiding and abetting him. There was nothing in the depositions to warrant that suggestion, and he himself did not desire to draw any such distinction. The evidence forthcoming since the trial established the fact not merely that Myles Joyce did not commit the murder, but that he was not present when it was committed, and that he was not out of his own house at the time. He challenged the Chief Secretary to say whether the depositions did not contain a declaration that the man Myles Joyce was innocent. The dying declarations were taken by Mr. Newton Brady, who was getting up the case. Why did not that gentleman put the crucial question to the deponents: "Was Myles Joyce present, or not?" He did not do so, because he knew that it was meant by the deponents to assert that Myles Joyce was not present, and knew nothing about the murder. Of the five men now in gaol, one, Michael Casey, acknowled his guilt, but stated that the other four men, with whom he had had no means of communication, were innocent of the murder, and had no participation in it. Surely that man's statement could be accepted. He had himself examined the young boy who was produced by the Crown at the trial, and the boy's recollection was perfectly clear that the men who murdered his father had blackened faces and wore white jackets. In the face of all these circumstances could the right hon. Gentleman withhold the inquiry he desired in order to lay all the facts before him. He wished the House not to be prejudiced by the circumstance that the four men for whom he pleaded admitted their guilt at the trial. The trial took place in Dublin, not one of the prisoners, except the boy still in gaol, spoke a word of English, while the counsel, the solicitors, the jury, and the Judge did not know a word of their language. At the opening of the trial an affidavit was presented on behalf of the prisoners, asking for the adjournment of the trial to the County Galway, in order that a new jury might be obtained, but this was refused. Patrick Joyce, the first of the men tried, was found guilty by the jury after eight minutes' consideration; Patrick Casey, the second man, was found guilty after twelve minutes' consideration; a postponement of the trial in order that an examination into the facts of the case might be made in the district was refused; and a third man, Miles Joyce, was found guilty by the jury after six minutes' consideration, the Judge when sentencing him stating that no shadow of doubt as to his guilt could be entertained by any sane man who had neard the evidence. Under these circumstances, was there any other means by which these men could have saved their lives except by pleading guilty? The Counsel for the prisoner said to the solicitor:—

> "You must induce those men to plead guilty, especially after the conviction of the unfortunate man Miles Joyce, whose case oppresses me very much."

Their solicitor followed the men to the gaol, and to him Michael Casey pleaded guilty, but stated that the four men for whom he was pleading knew nothing of the murder. Their solicitor informed Mr. George Bolton, but the Solicitor for the Crown refused to take the plea of guilty from Michael Casey if the other four men did not also plead guilty. Influence was accordingly brought to bear upon these unfortunate men to induce them to plead guilty, and under these circumstances they consented to do so. No one could be greatly astonished at the fact that, under the pressure that was brought to bear upon them, these unfortunate peasants, anxious to cling to life, pleaded guilty in the dock. He wished to remove from the Chief Secretary's mind any idea that in again bringing this case forward he had the slightest intention of casting discredit on Lord Spencer's Irish Administration. No one could accuse the present Lord Chief Justice of England of desiring to discredit the leaders of the Party to which he belonged when he sat in the House of Commons. When the cases to which he was drawing attention were before the House on a former occasion the Lord Chief Justice delivered a speech which went far in support of the view that an inquiry ought to be held. From that speech he would quote the following sentences :—

> "If the Amendment before the House did involve blame on Lord Spencer, the Lord Chancellor, and the ex-Chief Secretary he could not help it, because he believed it contained a statement which was emphatically true. He began the consideration of this case with the very strongest feeling that an unanswerable case had been made out on the part of the Crown, proving the guilt of the men convicted and the men who pleaded guilty. It was only by slow and painful steps that he had come to the conclusion that there did exist very grave doubt, to put it no higher, of the guilt of the man Myles Joyce, who had gone to his last account, and of the guilt of four of the men who remained in prison."

That was the language of a man who certainly could not be charged with desiring to discredit Lord Spencer's Irish Administration. He only pleaded for an inquiry on behalf of these prisoners, whose letters written from gaol were pathetic and touching declarations of innocence, and whose families were looking forward to the day when the Government would consent to reopen the matter. For his part, he believed that fresh investigation would establish the prisoners' innocence. He concluded by moving the Amendment standing in his name.

MR. W. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick's) seconded the Amendment.

MR. J. MORLEY: The hon. and learned Member in the course of his speech said that he was afraid the House must have found it rather tedious. Well, his speech has been long, but I can assure him that I have not found it tedious. I remember that 11 years ago the hon. and learned Member took an interest in this case, which, I thought at the time, did him honour, and I am aware that he has never ceased to bear the case in mind. I give the hon. and learned Member every credit for the ability, the earnestness and sincerity, which ever since 1884 have marked his investigations into this matter. But the hon. and learned Member has been all this time an advocate. There is no particular harm in that, of course, but as an advocate he has left out of sight a great many considerations bearing against his own view of the case. I am extremely glad to-night to take note of his emphatic statement that he is most anxious that it should not be thought that he entertains any desire to cast a slur upon the integrity, the uprightness, the absolute fairness of Lord Spencer. Then the hon. and learned Member has said more, for he has said that he finds nothing to quarrel with in the findings of the juries on the facts as laid before them, and that they could have found no other verdicts. That admission will clear the way to enable us fairly to consider the issue the hon. and learned Member has presented without any personal considerations supervening. The hon. and learned Member says that the present peaceful condition of Ireland affords a fitting opportunity for an Inquiry. But I confess I do not see how the peaceful condition of Ireland, at which we all rejoice, justifies an inquiry into this matter. I can quite understand that the condition of Ireland might be brought forward as a ground for exercising the prerogative of mercy—for showing clemency to the men when the time comes in a couple of years for revising their sentences, but I do not understand the train of reasoning by which the hon. and learned Member connects the present state of Ireland with his argument for re-opening this subject by a judicial or semi-judicial Inquiry. How many Inquiries are we to have into the Maamtrasna case? The hon. Member has not told the House—perhaps he does not know—how many Inquiries there have been. The murders took place in August, 1882, and the trials took place in November of the same year. There have been many Parliamentary demonstrations made in this House to interest gentlemen of both Parties sitting on the Treasury Bench. Let it be understood that I have no wish to regard this as a Party question. The last and most remarkable occasion of such a demonstration was in the summer of 1885, when Lord Carnarvon came into Office, and the right hon. Member for Bristol, then the Leader of the House, promised that his Lordship would consider any memorial sent to him on behalf of the prisoners. So far as I can make out, after examining the voluminous Papers in the case, no memorial was presented to him.

Mr. HARRINGTON said, he had stated so. He thought the friends of the prisoners would present a memorial, but the Government went out of Office before he discovered that a Memorial had not been presented.

Mr. J. MORLEY : The Government was in Office seven months, and it was rather curious that during all the time that Lord Carnarvon was in office nobody thought it worth while to present a Memorial to him on the subject.

Mr. HARRINGTON : The Government were not in Office seven months after the promise of Inquiry was made.

Mr. J. MORLEY : There was plenty of time, at all events, to present a Memorial. Many years have elapsed since these events, and there have been a considerable number of inquiries in connection with Memorials addressed to the several Governments that succeeded the Irish administration of Lord Carnarvon. The cases were considered by Lord Carnarvon in 1885; after that, in December, 1887, as I am informed, Lord Ashbourne, acting I presume as Lord Justice, had a Memorial brought to his notice, and after considering it directed that the law should take its course. The cases were next brought before Lord Londonderry, who took similar action. They again came before Lord Ashbourne in November, 1888, with the same result—that the law should take its course. Lord Zetland considered the cases both in 1890 and 1892, and during the existence of the present Administration they were also carefully considered, in 1893. Therefore the hon. and learned Member is asking us to institute an Inquiry, when as a matter of fact inquiries have been instituted by successive Lord Lieutenants and by more than one Lord Chancellor or Lord Justice.

Mr. HARRINGTON said, that the examinations that had taken place were insufficient and unsatisfactory. He himself had never attended these inquiries; not one of the many facts he had brought before the House that night had been asked of him, and many of them had not been placed before the Irish Executive at all.

Mr. J. MORLEY : I do not quite follow the hon. and learned Member, but I must say that I do not consider that in his speech to-night he has adduced one single new fact, or set of facts, which sets up a new *prima facie* case to justify this House in voting that the Government of the day should institute a special Inquiry. The hon. and learned Member seems to be discontented with the many inquiries which have been conducted by the responsible men whom I have mentioned.

Sir A. K. ROLLIT (Islington, S.): Will the right hon. Gentleman state before whom the Inquiries actually took place?

Mr. J. MORLEY : The hon. and learned Member must know that when a Memorial is presented in Dublin all the facts connected with the case are most carefully considered. The Judge is consulted, and every step is taken to arrive at the truth of the facts. Now I wish to ask what sort of Inquiry it is that the hon. Member desires. As I said just now, the hon. Member is discontented with the Inquiries which have been conducted by Lord Lieutenants and others, and I should like to know what is the kind of inquiry he really does desire.

Mr. HARRINGTON : I tell the right hon. Gentleman that I should be satisfied with his own Inquiry. If he will take the facts I present to him, and if he will undertake to conduct the Inquiry himself, I should be absolutely satisfied.

Mr. J. MORLEY : Then, Sir, if the hon. and learned Member takes up that position, all he has got to do is to send a memorial to Dublin Castle, and I will undertake to him now, in the presence of the House, to go into that memorial. I cannot say anything more than that.

Mr. HARRINGTON : I am satisfied.

MR. MORLEY: I will willingly undertake to go into all the circumstances of the case, so far as he is able to produce anything new, and if that is all the hon. Member wants the issue is at an end. Because what has been in my mind to-night, while listening to the speech of the hon. and learned Member, going back to the old Debates in which I took no part, being then a comparatively new Member, was to what persons, tribunal or authority are you going to commit this Inquiry? See where we are. This horrible crime was committed in 1882. The boy on whose evidence the hon. and learned Member laid such stress was then nine years of age. What kind of advantage have we in examining that boy, now a young man 22 years of age, or in examining the informers who afterwards recanted their information, which not one jury but three juries possessed 13 years ago. I must, however, warn the hon. Member beforehand, in order to be quite honest and straightforward with him. I have read pretty laboriously the depositions and general facts in the case. If he has any new fact to adduce, any new particle of evidence whatever, I will give it all the attention I possibly can, and certainly I hope he will believe that there is no man in the House who would be more willing to give these men the benefit of any doubt than I am. Still, I think it right to warn the hon. and learned Member I do not expect that after any Inquiry I shall come to any other conclusion than that already arrived at, but I promise him that I will undertake to weigh any fact which he will bring before me in connection with his memorial.

MR. HARRINGTON assumed that the right hon. Gentleman did not mean to preclude him from presenting all the facts which he had brought before the House to-night?

MR. J. MORLEY replied, that he should himself piece on the new facts to the general facts which were brought out before the tribunal.

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford) said, that what his hon. Friend asked was that the Inquiry should be an inquiry into the whole case, and that the whole of the facts, whether old or new, should be presented to the right hon. Gentleman for Inquiry by himself.

MR. J. MORLEY pointed out that of course the new facts could only be measured and weighed in connection with the old facts. That was clear. He wished to be perfectly clear and explicit. The Inquiry would be conducted like a coming up in ordinary course for reconsideration on its merits.

MR. HARRINGTON said, he wanted to present the whole case, and with the right hon. Gentleman's discretion or decision he should be satisfied.

MR. J. MORLEY repeated his promise to carfully consider the whole subject.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

THE RULE OF THE ROAD AT SEA.

*MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) moved the following Amendment:—

> "And we humbly represent to your Majesty that the Order in Council made by your Majesty, upon the recommendation or the Board of Trade with the concurrence of the Admiralty, on the 30 day of January, 1893, is calculated seriously to increase the dangers of the sea, and we humbly pray that your Majesty will be graciously pleased to rescind that Order; and we further humbly pray that your Majesty will be graciously pleased to refuse assent to the recommendation to your Majesty, of the Board of Trade with the concurrence of the Admiralty, that your Majesty should make an Order in Council to carry into effect the revised regulations for preventing collisions at sea, as communicated to shipowners by the Board of Trade circular of March 6, 1894."

He asked for the indulgence of the House while he dealt with a difficult and technical subject which concerned the most important industry in this country and the fate of a quarter of a million of British seamen. For two years he had been endeavouring to raise the question, and had always been shouldered out on the plea that it was not a matter concerning Parliament, but a matter of administration. He could not proceed without making one remark on the extraordinary tactics which he had been met with in the most recent stage of the proceedings. First of all they were told by the President of the Board of Trade that he would listen to nothing, but would enforce the rules. But at the eleventh hour, when the right hon. Gentleman became aware that the shipping interest and every seaman in this country were against him and that he might run some risk of being defeated by his own followers, he accepted the suggestion of the Member for Perthshire for the appointment of a Committee. He had informed the hon. Member that he would call attention to his action. The hon. Member was one of those who most earnestly pressed him to bring the matter forward and promised him his support. He considered that the hon. Member owed it to himself to inform him that he was about to make this entirely new and extraordinary proposal, and he left it to the House to judge whether it was in consonance with Parliamentary practice, and courtesy, and propriety, that when a Member placed a Motion on the Table, one of his allies should at the last moment go behind his back and make an arrangement with the enemy. The right hon. Gentleman had asserted, in reply to a question, that he did not recede from his previously-announced determination. But, if he meant to put these rules in force, what was the good of a Committee? They had already had hundreds of Committees on the subject invariably packed by the Board of Trade, each over-riding the conclusions of its predecessor, till at last they were brought face to face with the most stupendous muddle ever perpetrated even by the ingenuity of a Public Department. His position and the position of every shipmaster, pilot, and shipowner in this country, was that the revised regulations were bad, and, instead of being calculated to prevent, were calculated to increase collisions, and therefore they ought not to be enforced upon the shipping of this country. Without one single exception every single man outside the Board of Trade had agreed in condemning these revised regulations for preventing collisions at sea, in two respects at any rate—namely, in respect of the screening of the side-lights, and the rules as to sound signals. No doubt the unavoidable dangers of the sea were great, but they were as nothing in comparison with the most serious danger of all—the danger of collision with other vessels. He distinguished between natural and artificial danger of the sea, because he claimed that the danger of collision was artificial, and had been made much greater than it need be by the Board of Trade inventing rules of their own instead of going to the sea, taking the advice of seamen and framing consistent, certain, and practical rules. During the five years from 1870 to 1875 inclusive, there were lost at sea from all causes 3,513 British vessels. In the five years from 1889 to 1893 the number of losses was only 2,451, so that, although the number of ships had largely increased in the last 22 years, the total loss of vessels had very largely decreased. But when they turned to those losses due to collisions they found that, instead of decreasing, they had largely increased during the same period; for whilst from 1870 to 1875 the losses from collisions (included in the former figures) were 286, or 8 per cent. of the whole, from 1889 to 1893 they had risen to 425, or 17 per cent. of the total. Thus, whilst the dangers of the sea which were not affected by the rules of the road had decreased, the dangers of collisions which were affected by the rules of the road had enormously increased. He drew the inference that that must undoubtedly be due to some defect in the rules themselves. The present rules were bad, but the revised rules were worse. One of the most serious defects in the present rules was that since their first elaboration in 1862 they had been subjected to incessant changes on the part of the officials of the Board of Trade, rendering them even more uncertain and complicated, with the result, as he charged, of a considerable increase in the loss of vessels by collisions at sea. The recent deplorable collision between the *Elbe* and the *Crathie* was a case of the rule of the road at sea, they being crossing ships. The case with regard to two crossing ships was that each one was subjected to four different rules, two of them dependent upon contingencies which had to be calculated before the helmsman or master could ascertain whether they were applicable to the particular case or not. He only used the *Elbe* and the *Crathie* case to show how complicated and doubtful is the instruction professed to be given by the rule. Each ship was under four rules, and two of the rules were entirely dependent for their applicability upon the question whether or not a certain set of circumstances had arisen. The rule of the road at sea had existed ever since man began to navigate the seas, and in the case of England, up to half a century ago, the rule was good, short, simple, and certain. It was a rule made by practical men for practical men; it was a rule made by the Admiralty, or Trinity House, or by a combination of the two, for seamen; it was made by seamen for seamen. But some 40 years ago there arose the Board of Trade, and it went about like a roaring lion seeking whom it might devour. It devoured the bankrupt, the electrician, the labourer, the railways, and it then proceeded to devour the sailor, and the way in which it did so was to frighten the Admiralty and the Trinity Board out of all concern with the rule of the road at sea. He did not entirely acquit the Admiralty of blame. The Board of Trade was unable to make any changes in the rule of the road at sea without the concurrence of the Board of Admiralty, and undoubtedly that security was put into the Act by Parliament for the very reason that there might be some controlling power or body with technical knowledge to override any vagaries that might otherwise be resorted to by the Board of Trade. The Board of Admiralty, with its Sea-Lords fresh from sea, was a body competent to criticise a proposed alteration of the rules of the road at sea, but the Board of Trade had so terrorised the Admiralty that the Admiralty now appeared to regard its duties as merely formal, so that if the Board of Trade proposed any alteration or maintained any which had been made, it was certain the Admiralty would say "ditto." In that respect they had cause to complain of the Admiralty. The Board of Trade seemed to entertain the strangest notions as to a ship. Lord Farrer had said it was a strange thing that the rule of the road should be designed to suit ships. Sir Thomas Gray had stated that the general rule of the road for steamers was precisely the same as the general rule of the pavement for passengers. These gentlemen went the length of believing that a ship might be compared to a pedestrian or a cab or conceivably an omnibus; they never conceived the notion that a ship could not be handled as a pedestrian or as a vehicle. A ship must move in certain ways, and it could not be made to move in any other. The present President of the Board of Trade not only shared all the fallacies of his predecessors, but had formed others which were even more astonishing. In his reply to the deputation who reminded him of the difficulties of the proposed regulations, the right hon. Gentleman said the real question was not whether the additional rules as to sound signals in case of fog caused confusion of mind, but whether they increased danger, which was by no means the same thing. The expression of that opinion showed conclusively that the President of the Board of Trade was incapable of understanding the situation. Confusion at sea was danger; there was no danger equal to it. A seaman had better be wrong and certain and unconfused than right and uncertain and confused. He could not conceive that the right hon. Gentleman had given any consideration to the matter when he laid it down as an axiom that confusion was not dangerous. Comparison was indeed regarded by the right hon. Gentleman as an element of safety. The right hon. Gentleman had said, referring to the subject of additional noises, that, though the signals might not, perhaps, be understood, the inference would be drawn that there was a vessel near. That meant that when they heard at sea a lot of sounds which horribly confused them, their safety and not their danger was increased, because they would say—"Oh, there's a vessel near; we are safe." It might be the view of the right hon. Gentleman, but it was certainly not the view of practical seamen, that they got more safety by hearing more sounds. On the contrary, practical seamen were of opinion that that would be the greatest element of danger, because their minds would become confused as to the course they should take. But he did not blame the President of the Board of Trade for his want of knowledge of the sea. The right hon. Gentleman could not be expected to have such knowledge. The right hon. Gentleman knew all about the Holy Roman Empire, but not all about ships. Agur the son of Jakeh had said that the way of a ship in the midst of the sea was one of the three things that were too wonderful for him, and if it were possible to conceive of three things that were too wonderful for the President of the Board of Trade the way of a ship at sea was certainly one. But what he complained of was that the right hon. Gentleman, instead of listening to anybody who did know the way of a ship at sea, had placed himself entirely in the hands of officials. The right hon. Gentleman knew that all practical men were against those new regulations, but he did not listen to them. A prudent man, on undertaking the duties of a new office, and finding that all the officials were of one mind in a certain matter, and that everybody who knew anything practical about the matter was of another mind, would have said to the officials, "I must wait a bit; I must consider the matter before I take your view of it." But the right hon. Gentleman would not listen to anybody outside the office, any more than his predecessor, on the subject of those new regulations. Now what was the case against the new regulations? The revised regulations, as compared with the present regulations, were about half as long again. Their length was a very serious fault. The three elements of a good Code of the Sea were brevity, simplicity, and certainty. In the old times when the Admiralty managed affairs one could put the regulations on a sheet of notepaper. Now, one for the same purpose would require a book as big as the great historian Bryce's "American Commonwealth," and also a Philadelphia lawyer constantly at one's elbow to advise which regulation applied. The House would scarcely credit him when he stated that at least 33 different systems of light were prescribed either optionally or absolutely by the new revised regulations. Those 33 different systems of light might be seen all round at once. It was possible to have 33 vessels close at hand, and each in one of the situations for which the 33 different lights were prescribed. It was easy to imagine how confusing that would be to the helmsman, who would have to take notice of all the lights. That number of lights was at least double the number prescribed in the existing regulations, and, like many of the other rules, would lead to increased ambiguity and confusion. In one respect the new regulations had proceeded in the old direction. That was in Article 22, which said—

"When by these Rules one vessel is ordered to get out of the way of another, it shall, if possible, avoid crossing her bow."

But why have put it in that form? There were four other Rules in which the fatal Board of Trade words were used, "Keep out of the way," instead of the sound old words "Give way." When a seaman was told that he was to "give way," he knew that he must go under the stern of the other vessel; but when he was told to "keep out of the way," he might either cross the other vessel's bows, or go under her stern, as he liked. This uncertainty was the cause of a large number of collisions, and probably it might prove to be the cause of the recent collision. The new regulations were too long and complicated, and were most confusing in many respects; and where the Board of Trade had proceeded rightly in the direction of cutting away, they had not done it clean, but had put the new words, "Keep out of the way," in four rules, and the old words, "Give way," in the fifth. What was the case urged by the Board of Trade in defence? The first line of defence was, the Washington Conference. He believed it was a huge mistake to have agreed with the appointment of that Conference. The fact that it was agreed to by the right hon. Gentleman below him did not alter his mind; and his right hon. Friend was not responsible for the ulterior consequences. It was a Conference of 28 nations, such as Great Britain and Hawaii, the United States and Venezuela, France and Samoa, Germany and Nicaragua. Little nations which did not possess as much as a boat each possessed a vote, and were placed on an equality with Great Britain, which owned more than half the tonnage of the world. There were 64 delegates—insurance agents, diplomatists, judges, and lawyers by the dozen. There were two important Members—the hon. Baronet who was the Recorder of London (Sir C. Hall) and Mr. Goodrich. Mr. Goodrich said at the Conference that—

> "he and Delegate Hall were mere theoretical sailors who had gathered their knowledge of the question from collision cases in the courts;"

and he added that of course they "who did not know anything about it" must be very cautious where experts disagreed. The natural result of such a Conference was a longer code, a more refined code, and more niggling and hair-splitting code—a code infinitely more difficult for seamen to work, and infinitely more easy for lawyers to argue about. It was the result to be expected from a Conference composed mainly of lawyers. There were truly a few sailors —three Admirals and two captains from Great Britain; but he noticed that they had almost nothing to say, and that all the talking was done by the lawyers. The President of the Board of Trade sheltered himself behind the Washington Code, and the assumed international agreement to adopt that code. But the Washington Code was not here in question; what was objected to were the revised regulations which the right hon. Gentleman and his officials had founded upon that code. When the Board of Trade received the code, instead of treating it as a sacred thing, they cut it up, suspended part of it, altered and re-altered it, and withdrew alterations and played such pranks with it that, when it came out in the revised regulations, it was difficult to recognise. There were two points in the regulations to which particular objection was taken. One was the new method of screening the side-lights. He said "new method" advisedly. The old law and regulation was, that the side-lights should be fitted so as to show over an arc of the horizon of 10 points, from right ahead to two points abaft the beam, and should be so screened as not to show across the bows of the vessel. For 30 years that regulation had been followed. Now the Board of Trade had seen fit to bring into force the tremendous engine of an Order in Council, making in the regulation what he called an alteration, and what the right hon. Gentleman called an explanation. There had been an alteration from 10 points to 10 points *plus* 4 degrees, and the result had been that the screening of the lights had led to the two lights squinting across the nose of the ship and across its bows in front, the very thing that had to be provided against. This Order in Council, then, was one of the things that he complained of, and one of the things that he asked should be rescinded. It was claimed that this was no new thing; indeed, the President of the Board of Trade claimed, among other things, that he had made the lights to squint less and not more. If that were so, how then was it that the Board of Trade had been enduring this state of things for 30 years without a movement being made? If the Order in Council only put into force the law as it existed, the Board of Trade had already full power to put it in force without an Order in Council, and this simply by the orders of its inspectors. But every seaman knew that this was an entirely new thing. It raised the great danger of enabling the port light to be seen on the starboard bow, and *vice versa;* whereas the whole object, of the rule was, that sailors should never see the light except on the bow to which it belonged; that there should be certainty that when they saw the port light they were on the port side of the ship. This certainty, however, was what the screening regulation had removed, and it had increased the dangers in the regulations as they now existed. What happened with regard to the Admiralty? He had asked the Secretary to the Admiralty a question on the point, and the hon. Gentleman replied that they had not altered their lights. The Admiralty knew too well the risk, and they had disregarded the Board of Trade New Order in Council.

*MR. BRYCE: The Secretary to the Admiralty had replied that the Admiralty lights were exactly the same as now provided by the Board of Trade.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES said he had fortified himself with a copy of "Hansard," and these were the words which the Secretary to the Admiralty used:—

> "No alteration has been made in the manner of screening the side-lights of Her Majesty's ships, which has for many years approximated

to the system lately defined by the Board of Trade."

All ships "approximated" to that system; it was true enough to say that, but this was the complaint of the Board of Trade. He maintained, therefore, that the answer as reported in "Hansard" was strictly correct, and the incorrect and misleading version of it, now sought to be foisted on the House, had no foundation except in the fancy of the right hon. Gentleman. Here then was a thing which the Board of Trade knew to be new, and as wrong and confusing as it was new, and which had not been acceded to by the Admiralty. The Admiralty in the system of screening their lights were practically resisting the Board of Trade, but all merchantmen had to submit to it with fear and trembling. There could not be a stronger condemnation of the folly of this Order in Council, or a better illustration of the necessity for its repeal. The other point was as to the sound signals. He had asked the right hon. Gentleman to say whether the sound signals had not been increased from 3 to 11. The right hon. Gentleman knew this to be true, but he was incapable to give the answer he should have expected from him, because the answer had been put into his hands by the officials of the Department. The right hon. Gentleman began to distinguish between fog signals and sound signals to be used when ships were in sight of each other. He now asked the right hon. Gentleman, as a practical sailor, this question:—"Where are you going to draw the line between fog and in sight?" Would not the proposed change which the right hon. Gentleman thought was conducive to safety really lead to confusion. It was clear that the multiplication of sound signals increased the uncertainty of mind and the danger of the seaman. As to these sound signals and the screening side-lights, there was complete unanimity on the part of those who understood ships. The right hon. Gentleman said there were no complaints in 1892 and 1893, but he (the hon. Member) had made that House resound with his complaints. He was treated with contumely, smiled at, derided, and dismissed. He had cited the protest of Thames Pilots, which was not printed in the Blue Book, and he feared that further protests like that had been suppressed, and the misleading impression given that no complaints were made. The right hon. Gentleman said, forsooth! that all other nations had agreed to these regulations, and that therefore we should agree to them. He said they should still resist them if they were bad. What did it matter whether Nicaragua or Hawaii agreed in saying a thing was right if we knew the thing to be bad. That was no answer at all. But was the answer true? Was France prepared to promulgate these regulations? Why, France had decided not to promulgate them till she saw more clearly whither they would lead. Germany had resisted tooth and nail. He had a telegram from the Cunard Line that America had now determined to suspend the sound-signal regulations. No doubt the right hon. Gentleman had the advice of an eminent lawyer, but he wanted to know this—if they were going to a lawyer for seamanship, would they go to seamen for law? He thought they might do that. They might call in the captain of the foretop and a few able seamen before the mast, to decide whether France was or was not at war with Madagascar. It was a most serious subject, and he believed he had disposed of every argument. Everybody who knew what a ship was, was at one on this subject, and he warned the right hon. Gentleman that unless he gave way there would be an agitation all over the country. He should go about the country himself, and raise all the sea-ports until they got back the old system of shortness, simplicity, and certainty. The right hon. Gentleman knew he was wrong. It would be a very simple matter to rescind these rules, to follow the example of America, and to give up sound signals and the new screening of side-lights.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. J. BRYCE, Aberdeen, S.) said there was only one remark in the speech of the hon. Gentleman with which he could agree, and that was the remark that he had not done justice to the subject. He certainly had not done justice to the Department he had attacked when he left him only five minutes in which to reply to his somewhat irrelevant and sometimes discourteous attack. The hon. Member had given some statistics about collisions which were entirely erroneous.

*MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES: I got them from your own papers.

MR. BRYCE said that then the hon. Member had entirely misunderstood the papers, for they would prove, not that the new regulations were bad, but that the regulations in force were bad. The side-light question was one entirely within their own control, and if he had time he could have satisfied the House that there was no ground for the suggestions the hon. Member had made. With regard to the question of fog-signals, that was a point which it was impossible to explain in a few words to the House. The hon. Member did not try to explain it because he never mentioned to the House any one of those fog signals. No serious attempt had been made to show that they would tend to increase collisions. It was said that one signal might be taken for another, but the best advice he could obtain—and they had the best nautical advisers at the Board of Trade—was to the effect that, although some of the signals might occasionally be mistaken, there was no reason to think that they would increase the danger of collisions. The hon. Member had not referred to the most important aspect of the question, the international aspect. These rules had been brought back from the Washington Conference, they were submitted to a highly-competent Committee, that Committee reported three times unanimously in favour of them, and after all that how could any one suppose that the Board of Trade did not take the trouble to obtain advice upon them? Those rules had now been acquiesced in by all the Powers, the matter had assumed a considerable international importance, and if this country threw them over, she might lose the probability of an international agreement. He had, therefore, come to the conclusion that it was better to go on than to leave the matter open. His hon. Friend behind him had asked him at question time if he had any objection to a committee, and he said that the House might reasonably desire to inquire into the matter, and, therefore, he had no objection to the appointment of a Committee, and he hoped that answer would be satisfactory. He would only say further that when that Committee was appointed, the hon. Gentleman opposite would, no doubt, be prepared with the evidence of his friends, and the whole matter would be inquired into. He hoped that the hon. Member would not press the Amendment to a division.

MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES then withdrew his Amendment.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now Adjourned."—*Mr. J. Chamberlain.*

Motion agreed to.

LEICESTER ELECTION WRITS.

The adjourned Debate upon the Motion of Sir H. James for a Select Committee was resumed by

MR. TIMOTHY HEALY (Louth, North), who said he was sorry to oppose a gentleman who was so courteous on all occasions; but he wished to ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman whether he would omit the words instructing the Committee to report—

> "Whether the case is such as to require further action in respect of such Returns on the part of the House."

The right hon. and learned Gentleman said he did not want to insert the two words. For himself he was convinced that the point taken by the right hon. and learned Gentleman was a good one, that it was fatal, and that if we raised our Petition the seats would be vacated; and how could a Member of the Committee, who was convinced of this, wish to stop there? All the requirements of the case would be met if there were enquiry, if it were made known what had taken place and was upon record; and the Committee need not be bound to come to the further conclusion suggested in the Motion. It was that language he objected to. He was satisfied what the outcome would be if the Committee were bound to report under this instruction. His point was, that the proper tribunal to come to such a decision was Her Majesty's Judges; and for the House to overhaul an election after the time allowed to others for objecting to it had passed, would be a revolutionary proceeding. He, therefore, appealed to the Mover to omit the concluding words of the Motion.

SIR H. JAMES (Bury, Lancashire) said it was in order to meet the view of the hon. and learned Gentleman that these words had been inserted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer was it;

to prevent the Committee giving a judicial decision to vacate the seats, and to leave it to the House, not only to determine the matter, but also specially to determine whether the case was such as required any further action. If it did not call for further action the gentlemen would keep their seats. So it was to carry out the very view expressed by the hon. and learned Gentleman that these words were inserted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. If the hon. and learned Gentleman thought it well, he might confer with the Leader of the House, and ask him to strike out the words; but to strike them out would defeat the object the hon. Member had in view. There could be no objection to delay if he required further time for consideration.

[Debate Adjourned to Wednesday.]

PLUMBERS' REGISTRATION BILL.

*MR. LEES KNOWLES (Salford, W.) moved the Second Reading of his Bill. He explained that the country had been divided into districts for the instruction and examination of Plumbers, who received certificates when they had passed a theoretical and practical examination. It was desired that these certificates should be recognised by Law, as certificates were in other trades or professions. It was important that Plumbers should be practical men, who thoroughly understood their work; and that competency would be appreciated by many in connection with the prevailing frost.

MR. W. E. M. TOMLINSON (Preston) doubted whether the scheme would be really advantageous to the public. The question had been referred, on one occasion, to a Select Committee, and on another to the Standing Committee on Trade; it had received considerable attention upon several days; and the real difficulty experienced was that of giving practical effect to the provisions of a Bill of this kind. To be useful, it required to be properly administered by one of the Departments of the State. The Local Government Board could not be induced to take an interest in it; and practically the working of the Bill broke down because it could not be made the business of any Department of the Government. Unless some Department could be entrusted with the administration of the Bill, it was of no use giving it a Second Reading.

Debate adjourned to Thursday, 28th inst.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT (1894) AMENDMENT BILL.

Considered in Committee and reported without Amendment; Read 3, and passed.

MOTIONS.

GROCERS' CERTIFICATES (SCOTLAND) ABOLITION BILL.

On Motion of Sir John Leng, Bill to abolish Dealers' or Grocers' Certificates in Scotland.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday 3rd April, and to be printed. [Bill 108.]

PARISH COUNCILS (LABOURERS' COTTAGES) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Cyril J. S. Dodd, Bill to amend the Local Government Act, 1894, so as to empower Parish Councils to provide or acquire Cottages for Labourers.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Friday 1st March, and to be printed. [Bill 109.]

MORTGAGEES' COSTS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. R. B. Haldane, Bill to amend the Law relating to the Costs allowed to Mortgagees.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Monday 4th March, and to be printed. [Bill 110.]

SPECIAL JURIES BILL.

On Motion of Mr. W. H. Long, Bill for amending the Law as to Special Juries.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Friday 1st March, and to be printed. [Bill 111.]

POOR LAW OFFICERS' SUPERANNUATION BILL.

On Motion of Mr. W. H. Long, Bill to provide for Superannuation Allowances to Poor Law Officers and Servants, and for Contributions towards such Allowances by such Officers and Servants, and to make other relative Provisions.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Friday 1st March, and to be printed. [Bill 112.]

PUBLIC LIBRARIES (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. William Field, Bill to amend the Public Libraries (Ireland) Act.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 113.]

House adjourned at Twelve minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Friday, 15th February 1895.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR took his seat on the Woolsack at a Quarter after Four of the clock.

NEW BILL.

THE EARL OF WEMYSS presented a Bill, the object of which is to secure Uniformity in the granting of Licences for the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors, by way of renewal or transfer. The Bill, he explained, was drafted by the late Lord Bramwell, who prepared it because he was convinced that the present state of the law, as disclosed in a celebrated case heard in their Lordships' House, was unsatisfactory and unjust. He trusted that a measure drafted by so eminent a lawyer and statesman would be favourably considered at the Second Reading stage.

Bill read 1^a.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND).

The Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1894, Amendment Bill brought from the Commons.

Bill read 1^a.

House adjourned at Twenty-five minutes past Four o'clock till Monday next at a Quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, 15th February 1895.

The House met at Three of the clock.

OCEANS AND DERELICTS.

MR. J. C. MACDONA (Southwark, Rotherhithe): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade, whether he is aware that, in the *New York Herald* of 29th January last, it is stated that the United States steamer *Vesuvius*, Lieutenant Commander Harry Knox, left the New York Navy Yard the day before for an indefinite cruise along the coast in search of derelicts; and whether he is prepared to advise our Government to act in a similar manner, and, in conjunction with the Admiralty, portion off one of Her Majesty's Cruisers (as was recently done in the case of H.M.S. *Blenheim*, in taking the body of the late Premier of Canada to America) to search for derelicts on the well defined ocean routes between England and America.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (MR. BRYCE, Aberdeen, S.): I was not aware, until I saw the question, of the statement in the *New York Herald* to the effect that a United States Government steamer has started for a cruise along the North American Coast in search of derelicts. It seems unnecessary to despatch a Government vessel to search for derelicts along the coast of the United Kingdom, as it is the fact that, as stated in the recent Report of the Floating Derelicts Committee, that this duty has been regularly performed for many years by the General Lighthouse Authorities of the United Kingdom, with the result that the shores up to a distance of 50 or 60 miles from the Coast are constantly being freed from such dangers to navigation. With regard to a search for derelicts on the well-defined ocean routes between England and America, the Report of the Floating Derelicts Committee, which I think the hon. Member can hardly have carefully considered, shows the fruitlessness of any such attempt.

MR. MACDONA: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that only two shipowners, Mr. Jaffe, of Belfast, and Mr. Ismay, of the White Star Line, gave evidence before the Departmental Committee on Floating Derelicts, and that both were strongly of opinion that the Government ought to arrange for a Steam Cruiser to clear the well-known sailing routes of derelicts.

[No answer was given.[

STAMPS IN INDIA.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether the representation of the Queen-Empress on the postal and revenue stamps in India has been altered so as to give a fairly accurate likeness of Her Majesty at the present day; and whether, seeing that the effigy of the Queen on the stamps supplied in the United Kingdom was designed in the early part of the present reign, a more modern effigy, such as that upon the coinage last issued, can be designed for British stamps?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY, Nottingham, E.): I understand that the representation of Her Majesty on certain new Indian stamps has been altered as indicated in the question of the hon. Member. The stamps now in use in the United Kingdom are of comparatively recent design, the majority of them having been issued in the Queen's Jubilee year. I can see no necessity for replacing these stamps by fresh designs at the present moment, but the point referred to by the hon. Member is one that will naturally come up for consideration when a new series is called for.

THE IRISH MACKEREL FISHERY.

MR. J. C. FLYNN (Cork, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has yet received the memorials on behalf of the mackerel curers of Cork and Kerry, asking for the appointment of a responsible Government Inspector who shall be qualified to judge of the quality of the cured fish, and also asking that a Government brand should be applied to Irish-cured mackerel; and, whether in view of the importance of developing this important industry, the Government will accede to the request of the memorialists?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): I fear I cannot, at present, add anything to the reply given by me yesterday to the similar questions on this subject.

SMALL-POX AND IRISH NATIONAL SCHOOLS.

*MR. C. H. HOPWOOD (Lancashire, S.E., Middleton): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin has made an order that, in the National Schools under his and his clergy's control, no child shall, during the prevalence of small-pox, be admitted to such schools unless such child has been vaccinated, or, if over seven years, re-vaccinated; what authority has the prelate so to order; what law is there to compel re-vaccination in anyone; and, whether the law recognises that some children are unfit, by their constitution or ill-health, to undergo vaccination?

MR. J. MORLEY: I am not aware that the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin has made any order to the effect stated in the question of my hon. Friend. But I am aware that he has within the past few days communicated with the clergy under his control, suggesting the adoption of prudential means, under competent medical advice in each case, to guard against the spread of the small-pox epidemic, and asking them to confer with the teachers of the schools under their management, and arrange what steps should be taken to secure the effective vaccination of children of seven years of age and above. The general object of these communications, which, of course, are not mandatory, is to ensure, with the advice of the Sanitary Officers, due precautionary measures against the epidemic in the crowded schools in the City of Dublin and its suburbs. There is no law in Ireland compelling re-vaccination, except in the case of a child when the original vaccination was unsuccessful. The Vaccination Acts enable vaccinators in Ireland to certify, for sufficient cause, that a child is unfit to undergo vaccination when presented for that purpose and to postpone the operation.

*MR. HOPWOOD: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman, if the father of a child does not agree with what the Archbishop proposes, would that be a sufficient ground for excluding the child from school?

MR. J. MORLEY: It is not a question of agreement or disagreement between the Archbishop and the father of the child, but it is a question between the father of the child, the managers of the schools, and the law of the land.

*MR. HOPWOOD: May I ask if the right hon. Gentleman is aware that the practice has been, with regard to schools in England, that the Authorities have no right to insist on this as a condition precedent to the child receiving education?

MR. J. MORLEY: I cannot answer any number of questions that may be put on the subject. So far as I can see, the action of the Archbishop in this case was perfectly natural.

MR. T. SEXTON (Kerry, W.): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether it is not a fact that the parents of Dublin are extremely thankful to the Archbishop, and whether any case has turned up in which a parent has disagreed with the action of the Archbishop; and whether it would not be soon enough to determine the question when such a case has occurred?

MR. J. MORLEY: Judging from the Dublin newspapers of all opinions, the people are very glad of the action of the Archbishop.

***MR. W. JOHNSTON** (Belfast, S.): May I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman does not consider it satisfactory that the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin does not labour under the anti-vaccination mania of the hon. and learned Member?

THE PARCEL POST.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether the Government is aware that a Parcel Post Convention has been concluded between Japan and Germany, coming into operation on 1st January, 1895; and, whether a similar Convention has been entered into between the United Kingdom and Japan; and, if not, what is the cause of the delay?

MR. A. MORLEY: I will ask leave to answer at the same time a question to the same effect, of which notice has been given for Monday by the hon. and gallant Member for the Epping Division of Essex.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD (Epping): I beg to ask the Postmaster General, with reference to the recent notification of a Parcel Post to Japan by German steamers, viâ Hamburg, whether it would be possible to make similar arrangements in connection with the Peninsular and Oriental Company, which carries mails under contract to China, and maintains independent regular communication between Hong Kong and Japan, in connection with the China Service, so as to give shippers the advantage of sending parcels direct from London instead of viâ Germany?

MR. A. MORLEY: The answer to the first question is "Yes;" and I may add that I promptly made arrangements for the conveyance of parcels from this country to Japan, viâ Germany, issuing more than a week ago public notices on the subject, which the hon. Member has doubtless seen. Proposals for an Anglo-Japanese Convention were made to the Japanese Government in 1885, and have since been repeatedly renewed. There is reason to hope that the Japanese Government, which is solely responsible for the delay, may accept the proposals before long.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON asked if it was a fact that parcels for Japan from England were sent to Germany, and came back to England on the German steamers on their way to Japan, this being a port of call?

MR. A. MORLEY: Yes, Sir.

WATER SUPPLY AT WINCHESTER.

MR. W. WICKHAM (Hants, Petersfield): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, whether he is aware that at the recent conflagration at Winchester Barracks there was no adequate supply of water, and also that no fire-buckets were available; and, if so, whether precautions have been taken against any such want of common precaution in cases of fires breaking out in other buildings under the charge of the War Office?

***THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE** (Mr. WOODALL, Hanley): There was no failure in the supply of water during the recent fire at Winchester Barracks, though a certain time did elapse before full pressure could be obtained. There were 120 fire-buckets in the barracks, but the spread of the fire was so rapid that they were of little use, and all efforts had to be directed to working the fire-engines and saving property. The woodwork appears to have been very dry, and the strong wind which was blowing rendered hopeless the efforts of the men to save the building. Instructions for dealing with fires and for drill with fire apparatus are published in regulations, and there does not appear to have been any want of precaution in this case.

THE LOSS OF THE "ELBE."

***SIR J. LENG** (Dundee): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade, whether, in view of the loss of life consequent on the collision of a comparatively small trading steamer with the ocean-going passenger steamer *Elbe*, he has power, under existing legislation, to require that all vessels built under Board of Trade surveys shall have bulkheads and water-tight compartments in accordance with the recommendations of the Bulkheads Committee, 1891, so as to render them practically unsinkable by collision; and, if so, whether effect is now given in all cases to those recommendations?

MR. BRYCE: The Board of Trade have no power under existing legislation to require any vessels to have bulkheads and water-tight compartments, but when vessels are divided into efficient water-tight compartments, in accordance with the recommendations of the Bulkheads Committee, 1891, they are exempted from carrying a part of the boats, rafts, and buoyant life-saving apparatus required by the Rules made under the Merchant Shipping (Life-Saving Appliances) Act, 1888.

MR. H. S. FOSTER (Suffolk, Lowestoft): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade, whether he is now in a position to state what action the authorities of the Trinity House will take in reference to the wreck of the steamship *Elbe*, and the danger which it causes both to fishing property and to navigation; and, whether he is aware that on the 11th inst. the master of the Lowestoft smack *Free Lance* reported to the Custom House Authorities at Lowestoft that he had seen the masts of the *Elbe* projecting above the water, and that he had taken soundings and found the depth 17 fathoms, a depth at which the vessel would be a serious impediment to navigation in an upright position.

MR. BRYCE: I have not yet received any reply from the Trinity House, and therefore am not able to make any positive statement on the subject. I telegraphed this morning to the Lowestoft Superintendent of Customs, inquiring whether a report had been made as to the masts of the *Elbe* being seen above water in an upright position. I have just received this reply: "Master *Free Lance* reported one mast of *Elbe* seen above water." The Superintendent does not say whether this mast was in an upright position. I am making further inquiry.

IMPORT DUTIES ON CURED MACKEREL.

MR. J. C. FLYNN: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether an import duty of about 28s. per barrel in Russia, and 6s. 3d. per barrel in the United States, is levied on cured mackerel, whereas the import duties on cured herrings does not exceed 7s. per barrel in Russia and 4s. 2d. in the United States; and, if so, whether the Government, in view of the importance of developing a new Irish industry, will use its good offices to induce the Governments of Russia and of the United States to reduce the duties on cured mackerel to the same as that on cured herrings?

***SIR E. GREY**: I am afraid that representations to foreign Governments to alter import duties, which they have arranged to suit their own interests, would not be attended with any good result.

ARMENIAN COMMISSION.

MR. F. A. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware that many Armenians are being removed by the Turkish Authorities from the Sassoun district southward, and out of reach of the Commission of Inquiry; and whether representations will be made to the Porte against this deportation of possible witnesses on the matters to be brought before the Commission?

***SIR E. GREY**: If any facts of this nature come to the knowledge of Her Majesty's Consular Officers, or of the Delegates who accompany the Commission, they will of course form the subject of a remonstrance.

MR. C. E. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (1) whether the Armenian witnesses being about to appear before the Turkish Commission of Inquiry sitting at Moush, in Armenia, Omer Bey, a Member of that Commission, has been appointed to the Governorship; and (2) whether, should this be the case, he will use the influence of Her Majesty's Government to oppose a step calculated to intimidate the Armenian witnesses?

***SIR E. GREY**: The answer to the first paragraph is in the affirmative. The Governor who held this post, before the appointment of the Commission, at the time of the alleged occurrences which are being investigated, has been removed. Omer Bey is an official of high reputation, and Her Majesty's Government do not consider that his provisional appointment seems likely to have the effect suggested in my hon. Friend's question.

ARMENIANS IN MARASH.

MR. F. A. CHANNING: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware that in Marash the feeling of the Moslem population is so embittered against the Armenians that they have been repeatedly marching in bands through the streets singing: "To-day we are going to kill the Giaours;" whether a complete state of terrorism is now prevailing in this city; and whether immediate representations will be made to the Porte that steps are urgently needed to prevent an outbreak of violence towards the Christians?

***SIR E. GREY**: Her Majesty's Government have received reports as to the existence of anti-Christian feeling among the Mussulman population of Marash. The attention of the Turkish Government has been called by Her Majesty's Ambassador to the state of affairs there and in other parts of the Aleppo vilayet, and inquiry has been promised.

BULGARIAN TARIFF.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he will explain on what grounds, in the present condition of British trade, Her Majesty's Government consented to the duty upon British goods entering Bulgaria being raised from 8½ to 10½ per cent., notwithstanding that England admits Bulgarian goods duty free?

***SIR E. GREY**: The Bulgarian Government represented that it would no longer be possible for them to meet their financial needs by Customs duties at the rate of 8½ per cent., and originally suggested that, on the termination, on the 13th of January, 1895, of the then existing Anglo-Bulgarian Agreement, the rate should be raised to 15 per cent. After some negotiation a rate of 10½ per cent. was accepted by Her Majesty's Government, on the consideration tha the duty was imposed for fiscal and no for protective purposes; that as regards amount it compared favourably with the rates existing in most Continental countries, and on the condition that British goods received most-favoured-nation treatment. This arrangement is to remain in force for two years, pending the conclusion of a more permanent Treaty.

CONGO FREE STATE.

MR. R. A. YERBURGH (Chester): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (1) whether the Anglo-Congolese Agreement of May last was objected to by France on the ground that the Congo Free State being the creation of International Law, and its neutrality being guaranteed by the Great Powers, signatories of the Berlin Act, any alienation, even of a restricted character, of any portion of its territories was invalid without the consent of the said Great Powers; (2) whether the consent of the said Great Powers has been given to the taking over of the Congo Free State by Belgium; (3) whether any agreement by Belgium giving the right of pre-emption over the Congo Territory to any Power is valid without the consent of the said Great Powers; and (4) whether such consent has been given to the agreement just made public between Belgium and France?

***SIR E. GREY**: The question of the hon. Member raises some points which may form the subject of discussion between the Powers interested, and it is therefore not possible to give a final answer upon them. I may, however, say that the answers to the second and last paragraphs of the question are, so far as we know, in the negative.

THE LOSS OF THE "KOWSHING."

SIR MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, if Her Majesty's Government has applied to the Japanese Government for compensation for any British subject lost in the sinking of the British steamship *Kowshing;* and, if application has been made, will he state the answer?

*SIR E. GREY : I cannot say more at present than that the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs is in communication with the owners of the *Kowshing* with regard to their claims.

POST-MORTEM EXAMINATIONS IN SCOTLAND.

SIR J. CARMICHAEL (Glasgow, St. Rollox) : I beg to ask the Lord Advocate, whether, in cases in which post-mortem examinations are made by direction of the Procurator Fiscal on behalf of the Crown, for the information of the Lord Advocate as Public Prosecutor, persons suspected of having caused the death by criminal or other means, or medical men who have had charge of the case prior to death, are granted facilities for being medically represented at the post-mortem examination ordered by the Crown; and, whether, in such cases, applications on behalf of interested persons for medical representation at the post-mortem are ever refused?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR, Clackmannan and Kinross) : Such post-mortem examinations are conducted in accordance with suggestions made by medical men of great eminence a number of years ago; and the practice is, to exclude from the examinations all persons not officially connected with them, unless the consent of Crown Counsel or the authority of a sheriff for the presence of other persons has been obtained. The examinations are generally held under a judicial warrant; and the view adopted and acted upon has been that, unless some special reason connected with public justice exists for the presence of third parties, the warrant should be carried out exclusively by persons acting under public responsibility. Applications to be allowed to be represented have been granted where made on behalf of a person suspected of having caused the death, or otherwise closely connected with the matter of inquiry; but they have been refused where some such quality of interest did not exist.

SIR J. CARMICHAEL : I beg to ask the Lord Advocate, whether, in cases of post-mortem examinations made by direction of the Procurator Fiscal on behalf of the Crown, for the information of the Lord Advocate as Public Prosecutor, such examinations are frequently conducted by only one official medical man, notwithstanding the circumstances that in the event of the case coming to trial the evidence of two medical men is necessary to prove the report?

MR. J. B. BALFOUR : Experience has proved that there are many cases in which it is quite unnecessary that two medical men should conduct the post-mortem examination.

FRANCE AND THE BELGIAN FREE STATE.

COMMANDER BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness) : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if Her Majesty's Government recognise the right of pre-emption over the Belgian Free State claimed by France; if the text of the last Franco-Belgian Treaty published in the *Times* of Saturday is correct; if the claims of France over the Free State have not been extended and amplified under that Treaty; and whether Belgium has any rights over the Free State other than those granted to the International Association of the Congo by the Powers concerned?

*SIR E. GREY : No official communication has yet been made to Her Majesty's Government of the arrangements between Belgium and France, and between Belgium and the Free State. The right of pre-emption has not been recognised.

WESTERN BASIN OF THE UPPER NILE.

COMMANDER BETHELL : I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if any arrangement has been come to with France with reference to the western basin of the Upper Nile?

*SIR E. GREY : No arrangement has been arrived at with reference to the western basin of the Upper Nile. The only arrangement come to is that regarding the frontier of the colony of Sierra Leone, which is about to be laid.

COMMANDER BETHELL : Are any negotiations pending?

*SIR E. GREY : Negotiations were begun last year. They have not been broken off, though they are not actually progressing at the present moment.

WAIMA.

MR. T. W. LEGH (Lancashire, S.W., Newton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether any reparation has yet been offered by the French Government for the death of the British officers killed in the fight near Waima, in December, 1893?

*SIR E. GREY: The answer is in the negative; it was decided to make this question part of a general settlement on which no agreement has yet been come to. The geographical position of Waima is still undetermined.

In answer to MR. TOMLINSON—

*SIR E. GREY said, it is quite certain that it is close to the boundary, but that boundary has never been traced, and it would be impossible to determine the position of Waima without a survey over a vast tract.

MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith): Is it possible to send a Commission to determine the frontier between this country and France in Sierra Leone, and have any preparations been made for such a Commission?

*SIR E. GREY: No, Sir, no preparations have been made.

DUNREE FORT, LOUGH SWILLY.

MR. W. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that the labourers working at the building of a new fort at Dunree, Lough Swilly, County Donegal, are only receiving 12s. per week, while the wages for the same class of labour is from 18s. to 20s. per week in England and Scotland; and whether he will order the same rate of wages to be paid in Ireland?

*MR. WOODALL: The War Department requires its contractors to pay the rate of wages current for similar work in the locality, and I am informed that the current rate for labourers at Dunree is 10s. to 12s. weekly.

MR. FIELD: Am I to understand the answer to mean that 12s. a week in Ireland is looked upon as equivalent to 20s. a week in England?

*MR. WOODALL: Of course, the cost of living and the rate of wages vary in different parts of the country, and the House of Commons Resolution of 1891 is strictly enforced in all such contracts as the one in question.

THE FRENCH EXPEDITION TO MADAGASCAR.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Government has recognised, or intends to recognise, the existence of a state of war between France and Madagascar; whether the Government has taken, or will take, steps to prevent British shipowners from conveying materials for, or otherwise assisting, either of the belligerent countries; and whether any, and what, instructions have been given to the Commanders of Her Majesty's ships of War on the Madagascar Station for the protection of British lives and property in the Island?

*SIR E. GREY: I must ask the hon. Member to postpone the first and second paragraphs of his question. The last paragraph will be dealt with by the Admiralty.

MR. W. JOHNSTON: Has the hon. Baronet seen the statement in the evening papers that British transports are carrying, not only war materials, but French Officers?

*SIR E. GREY: I have not seen any evening paper yet.

LABOURERS' DWELLINGS IN IRELAND.

MR. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what the Local Government Board intend to do with reference to the housing of the labourers at Tullyrap, near Raphoe, County Donegal, whose cottages have been condemned, and as to which he promised some months ago to make full inquiry?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Local Government Board Inspector is preparing an Improvement Scheme for the erection of 13 cottages in the Strabane Union, two of which, I understand, will be in the townland of Tullyrap. A scheme for seven cottages in the electoral division of East Urney, in this Union, has already been made by the Inspector and confirmed by the Local Government Board.

HIGH EXPLOSIVES.

*SIR C. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty—(1) if, in addition to the French Navy, the Japanese Navy are now using high explosive shells at sea; and (2) whether Parliament can, with due regard to the advantage of the public service, be informed if the British Fleet is now, in any degree, provided with such shell?

*THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON, Dundee): The Admiralty have no special information in regard to the first part of the Question. It would not be to the advantage of the public service to give a reply to the second part of the hon. Baronet's question.

AILSA CRAIG AND THE MAINLAND.

MR. E. WASON (Ayrshire, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that there is no means of communication between Ailsa Craig and the mainland during stormy weather except by means of carrier pigeons; and, whether, Ailsa Craig, being so much in the fairway for shipping from and to the Clyde, he could see his way to placing it in direct communication with the mainland by telegraph or telephone?

MR. BRYCE: I am informed by the Commissioners of Northern Lighthouses that carrier pigeons are very successfully employed at Ailsa Craig as a means of communicating with the shore for lighthouse purposes. But the question of connecting outlying lighthouse stations with the mainland in the interests of saving life is now being considered by a Royal Commission, and I am afraid that, pending their Report, I cannot say anything as to the particular case of Ailsa Craig, though fully sensible of the importance as regards Clyde shipping which its position gives it.

DISTRESS IN SOUTH SLIGO.

MR. T. CURRAN (Sligo, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he has received resolutions, passed at a public meeting at Curry, South Sligo, calling upon the Government to at once open public works, and give small loans to the occupiers of land to save the lives of the people; and, if he is prepared to state what measures (if any) the Irish Government have decided upon to cope with the destitution pointed to in these resolutions?

MR. J. MORLEY: My attention has been drawn to the resolutions referred to. I have asked the Local Government Board to furnish me with a Special Report as to the alleged existence of distress in this district. I have directed that a Special Report should be obtained.

SALMON IN THE RIVER CALLAN.

MR. DUNBAR BARTON (Armagh, Mid.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he is aware that the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland have placed a weir in the River Callan, at Greenhall, which stops all salmon from going up the river; whether he has been informed that Mr. W. F. Cardwell, a riparian landowner, who has put salmon ova in the river, has been refused a fish pass: and, whether he can state the reason for such refusal?

MR. J. MORLEY: The weir referred to forms part of the Lough Neagh Drainage District works, which were constructed by the Board of Works under the Act 5 and 6 Vic. C. 89 between the years 1846 and 1859. In the latter year a final award was made and the District was handed over to Trustees. The Board have, therefore, no longer any jurisdiction in the matter. So far as they have been able to ascertain, no objection was raised to the absence of a fish pass at the time of the Final Award. It appears to me, however, that if the gentleman named in the question provided the funds, and came to a friendly agreement with the Trustees, they might not object to the pass being put up.

MR. W. FIELD: Will the right hon. gentleman bring pressure to bear on the Commissioners of Irish Lands?

MR. BRYCE: I think these questions will have the effect of quickening the action of the Commissioners.

UGANDA.

COMMANDER BETHELL: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, if it is his intention shortly to present further Papers relating to the affairs of Uganda, and if he will lay upon the Table a map showing what portion of Unyoro has recently been included in the Uganda Protectorate.

*SIR E. GREY: It is intended to lay further papers presently; no portion of Unyoro has been included in the Uganda Protectorate.

In reply to a further question—

*SIR E. GREY said, Military operations have taken place in Unyoro, and there are military posts in Unyoro at the present time; but it would be quite wrong to say that the limit of the Protectorate has been in any way extended.

AGRICULTURE IN IRELAND.

MR. W. FIELD: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether the Government intend to establish a Board of Agriculture for Ireland as the late Prime Minister promised favourable consideration; and, whether he will bring in a Bill this Session to provide the £15,000 for a veterinary college in Ireland?

MR. J. MORLEY: As regards the suggested establishment of a Board of Agriculture for Ireland, I can hardly add to the opinions already expressed on behalf of the Government. The reply to the subject matter of the second paragraph is in the affirmative.

LUNATIC ASYLUMS IN IRELAND.

MR. B. COLLERY (Sligo, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether, with regard to the deputation which he received from governors of lunatic asylums in Ireland on the subject of providing funds for the large contemplated outlay on those establishments, who pointed out the advisability of the Treasury advancing money without interest, as was done prior to the passing of The Public Works (Ireland) Act, 1877; if the Government intend taking powers to enable them to do so; and, whether the Government are aware that the large contemplated outlay of close on £700,000 has to be borne by the rated occupiers of land in Ireland, who pay the whole of the county cess.

MR. J. MORLEY: In accordance with my promise to the recent deputation on behalf of the governors of the District Lunatic Asylums of Ireland, I duly brought their representations under the consideration of the Treasury. No final decision has been as yet come to.

THE POST OFFICE AND THE TELEPHONE COMPANIES.

*MR. H. S. FOSTER: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether, in view of the dissatisfaction which exists in various municipal bodies, both in England and Scotland, respecting the terms of the proposed contract between the Postmaster General and the telephone companies, and the desire expressed in the House that the matter should be properly discussed in the House before the agreement is signed, the Government will afford facilities for that purpose before the signature of the agreement.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): The Hon. Member was aware that negotiations were already proceeding, which he hoped might result in favourable terms being arrived at.

MR. H. S. FOSTER: Am I to understand that if those negotiations do not take a favourable turn, the House will have an opportunity of pronouncing its opinion on the agreement before it is signed.

SIR W. HARCOURT: My right hon. Friend the Postmaster General dealt with that subject last night.

IRISH SEED POTATOES.

MR. J. ROSS: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, is he aware that seed potatoes are imported in large quantities from Ireland to Malta every Autumn; has he been informed thatt he Governor of Malta prohibited the landing of the Irish cargoes in November last on the allegation that the potatoes were diseased, and that it has since been ascertained that the rejected cargoes were free from disease; whether he is aware that the Maltese farmers have in consequence been obliged to purchase inferior Austrian seed potatoes; and, what steps he proposes taking to prevent interference with the Irish export potato trade in future.

MR. J. MORLEY: It is a fact that restrictions were placed on the importation of seed potatoes into Malta last autumn. Large quantities of seed potatoes are stated to have been consigned to Malta from Ireland in past years, but the restrictions recently enforced by the Government of Malta applied to all such seed imported from the United Kingdom. The consignments were examined upon arrival in Malta last Autumn by a Commission appointed by the Governor, and a large quantity was rejected as being unfit for use as seed, whilst a number of bags were admitted. I am aware that disagreement has been expressed with the conclusions at which the Commission arrived with regard to the rejected seed. I have been in correspondence on the subject with the Colonial Office, and have been furnished by the Secretary of State with a report made last month by the Governor of Malta, in which he stated he had been advised that the season for the importation of seed potatoes was then too far advanced, and that it would not be practically useful to reconsider the question until the approach of the new season, and until the result of the restrictions enforced this season have been studied.

Mr. J. ROSS: Will the right hon. Gentleman take steps to prevent the Irish trade being interfered with in future?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I can take no steps beyond those which I have already taken; everything has been done that could be done upon this point.

Mr. ROSS: Can the right hon. Gentleman see his way to allowing the Irish Land Commission, or some other body, to examine these returns in order to find out if the returns of these potatoes are *bona fide*, or not?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I will see if anything can be done; I am anxious to do everything possible.

THE POST OFFICE AND FLATS.

Mr. H. S. FOSTER: I beg to ask the Postmaster General, whether any steps can be taken to diminish the grave inconvenience caused to the occupants of flats in Ashley Gardens by reason of the loud noises in the early hours of the morning proceeding from the new Post Office establishment recently erected there?

Mr. A. MORLEY: Every effort is made, and will be made, to conduct the Mail Service at the new District Post Office in Francis Street, Westminster, with as little noise as possible; but, considering the magnitude of the business carried on there, some noise is, I am afraid, inevitable.

SWINE FEVER.

Mr. F. A. O'KEEFFE (Limerick): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, what cause has given rise to the recent stringent Order of the Privy Council, Ireland, in reference to swine fever; and if his attention has been directed to the proceedings of the Limerick Board of Guardians on 13th instant, protesting against the enforcement of that Order in the division of Limerick?

Mr. J. MORLEY: This question was only placed on the Paper this morning for the first time, and I shall be glad if the hon. Gentleman will postpone it till Monday.

ALLEGED TOUTING BY A POOR LAW GUARDIAN.

Mr. M. McCARTAN (Down, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether his attention has been called to a matter recently brought before the Belfast Board of Guardians by Mr. Joseph M'Kebbon, P.L.G., with reference to alleged touting by a guardian among the contractors to and officials of the Belfast Union, to purchase clothes from him; is he aware that a committee, appointed to inquire into the matter, reported to the meeting of the Guardians, held on the 5th inst., that a number of contractors and officials stated they had been solicited by the Guardian and had given orders under the circumstances; and, whether he will state what action the Local Government Board intend to take in the matter?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The facts appear to be as stated in the question. I have referred the papers to the Attorney General to advise me what further action should be taken in the matter.

THE SWAZIS.

Sir R. TEMPLE (Surrey, Kingston): On behalf of the Member for the Ecclesall Division of Sheffield (Sir E. Ashmead-Bartlett), I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, whether the Volksraad have ratified the Convention of December 1894; and, whether, in the event of the Swazis refusing to accept Boer rule, the Boers' Government will be allowed by Her Majesty's Government to impose Boer rule upon our Swazi allies by force of arms.

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Mr.

SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): As regards the first question, the Volksraad have ratified the Convention of 1894. As regards the second question, I have informed the hon. Gentleman that I cannot answer a hypothetical question.

*In reply to a further question by SIR C. DILKE.—

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON said that a telegram had been received reaffirming the terms of the letter of President Krüger as to the exemption of British subjects from commandeering.

MR. W. E. M. TOMLINSON (Preston): May I ask whether this question does not arise out of terms of the Convention with the Boer Government, and if so, how it can be a hypothetical question?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I do not myself understand how it arises out of the terms of the Convention of 1894.

THE MEW ISLAND FOG HORN.

MR. M. McCARTAN: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade, whether he is aware of the complaints of mariners trading to Belfast Lough as to the insufficiency of the sound of the fog horn on Mew Island, off Donaghadee; whether he is aware that on numerous occasions the captains of the cross-channel steamers sailing to Belfast have found their steamers within a short distance of the breakers on the rocks before they even heard the sound of the horn; and, whether, considering the enormous passenger and goods traffic with Belfast, he will make inquiry for the purpose of having sufficient warning given to the mariners to enable them to avoid the danger?

MR. BRYCE: The Board of Trade, in March last, sanctioned the expenditure by the Commissioners of Irish Lights, of the sum necessary for the purpose of carrying out an experiment for the improvement of Mew Island Fog Signal. I regret to learn from the Commissioners that this experiment has not yet been carried out.

MR. A. F. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade, what is the latest time within which complaints in respect of rates increased prior to the passing of the Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1894, must be deposited with the Board of Trade to enable the complainants to recover damages for any unreasonable increase?

MR. BRYCE: Complaints must be lodged at the Board of Trade within "six months after the passing" of the Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1894. That Act came into force on August 25 last year, and the 24th instant being a Sunday, the Board of Trade recommend persons desirous of making complaints to file them at the Board of Trade not later than Saturday, the 23rd instant.

EMPLOYMENT IN THE DOCKYARDS.

MR. H. E. KEARLEY (Devonport): I beg to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty, the number of workmen working in Her Majesty's Dockyards discharged during the winter; whether such discharges were mainly occasioned in consequence of the money voted being expended on "special" work not contemplated in the Estimates; whether, in addition, all the employés were compulsorily made to lose a day's work in order to obviate further discharges; and, whether the Government will consider the advisability, when framing the Estimates for the year, of providing a reserve to meet the contingency of special work, and so avoid these mid-winter discharges?

MR. E. ROBERTSON: Since November 1 last, there had been a reduction of 156 on the total number of 20,410 men employed in the dockyards, and this reduction was due to new men not having been entered in all cases to fill the vacancies of men retired on pension on account of age, or for other reasons not connected with any reduction at the yards. Discharges had been caused by money being expended on special work. The yards were closed on the day before Christmas Day without the time being worked up, as arranged when the 48 hours working week was conceded. There was no necessity for providing any reserve to meet the contingency of special work.

MR. KEARLEY: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman to answer the first paragraph of my question?

MR. E. ROBERTSON: You can only arrive at the number of men discharged during the winter, by estimating the difference between the number of men and boys employed on the 1st November, and the number of men and boys employed now; I have no specific figure. The total reduction in the number of men from various causes is 156.

THE MILITARY CONTRIBUTION OF THE STRAITS SETTLEMENT.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, whether he is aware that in consequence of the large contribution demanded by Her Majesty's Government from the Straits Settlements, the unofficial Members of the Council, or some of them, together with the leading magistrates and other functionaries, have resigned office; and, whether the Secretary of State still intends to compel the official Members of the Council to vote such a contribution as he may decide upon?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: Three, out of seven, unofficial Members of the Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements have resigned their seats, and a fourth Member whose term of office has expired has declined to be renominated; 18 of the Justices of the Peace for Singapore, and the Members of the Chinese Advisory Board, have also resigned; as a protest, it is understood, against the decision of Her Majesty's Government, on the subject of the Military Contribution. The correspondence on the whole question will be laid before Parliament. With regard to the second part of the question, I may observe that it is a general principle of administration, and one not peculiar to the Government of Crown Colonies, that the paid components of a Government should vote in support of Government measures, when required, or else resign their seats.

CUSTOMS OUTDOOR DEPARTMENT.

*MR. W. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether, in the Customs Outdoor Department, in the classes of examining officer and higher grades, vacancies remain unfilled for a considerable period; how many such vacancies exist at the present time, and how long has each of these vacancies existed; and, whether the appointment of an officer to fill any of such vacancies is dated from the time such vacancy occurred.

*THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): Any delay that may occur is due to the necessity of deciding whether the post vacated is to be retained or not; and if it is decided to retain it, it is filled up without further loss of time. The appointment dates from the day when it was made, not from the time when the vacancy occurred. The vacancies at present existing are those of seven Examining Officers of the second class in London. They occurred at various periods between the 27th October and 15th December last, and the appointments are being kept open until experience of the revised system of Warehousing Accounts has shown whether they need be retained.

THE OFFICE OF WOODS AND FORESTS.

MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the public are entitled to see documents deposited at the offices of the Woods and Forests, on payment of fees; and, if so, whether such fees are on the same scale for inspection and copies as at the Record Office and the Board of Agriculture.

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT: The public are not entitled to inspect documents deposited at the Office of the Commissioner of Woods and Forests unless they have been given the right in any special cases by statutory provision. In such cases no fees would be charged except those (if any) specified in the special Act. If my hon. Friend intended his question to apply to the Land Revenue Records Office, I may inform him that there, too, the public have no general right of inspection except under the same conditions of special statutory provision, but that it is the practice of the Department, at their discretion, to give facilities to the public on payment of cash fees of 3s. 4d. for inspection and 1s. a folio for copies.

REBELLION IN HAWAII.

SIR T. ROE (Derby): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if any information has been received by Her Majesty's Government with reference to a sentence of death having been recently passed upon a British subject named Ricard, by a Court Martial sitting at Honolulu, for having, as was alleged, been concerned in a "Royalist rebellion" in favour of the deposed Queen of Hawaii?

*Sir E. GREY: One British subject and two American citizens have been sentenced to death under Martial Law by a Military Tribunal, and another British subject to imprisonment for life. Mr. Hawes, Her Majesty's Commissioner and Consul General, has, in the case of the British subject condemned to death, asked for a reprieve of sufficient length to enable him to send home the record of the trial. The sentence had not yet been confirmed by the President when the last information was sent. Mr. Hawes has been instructed by telegraph to ask for delay of the execution, if the prisoner was condemned to death for complicity only in the rising, or if condemned for actual participation without having had a fair open trial with opportunity for defence. In either case the evidence on which the sentence of death was grounded is to be sent home, and Mr. Hawes has been directed to act in concert with his United States colleague, who has received similar instructions.

SCOTLAND AND INDIAN IMPORT DUTIES.

Captain J. SINCLAIR (Dumbartonshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether it is the case that he has consented to receive a deputation of Scottish manufacturers in regard to the Scottish interests said to be specially affected injuriously by the recently imposed Indian import duties upon cotton; and, whether it is the declared intention of the Government to deprive the imposition of these import duties of all Protective character?

The SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Mr. H. H. Fowler, Wolverhampton, E.): It is the case that I have made an appointment to receive a deputation of Scottish manufacturers with reference to the recently-imposed Indian import duty upon cotton. In my despatch to the Government of India of the 13th December last I stated that—

> "Her Majesty's Government are precluded by their pledges from sanctioning the imposition of import duties on cotton goods unless under such conditions as will insure beyond question that the duties thus imposed will have no Protective effect."

I need hardly say that to that declaration I unreservedly adhere.

DISTRESS IN ENNIS.

Mr. W. REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether he has received a telegram containing a resolution, passed at a public meeting held in the town of Ennis, with reference to the distress which exists in that town; and, whether he will consider the advisability of allocating a portion of the grant towards the relief of the distress?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I have received the telegram to which the hon. Member refers, calling upon me to give some share of the grant towards the relief of the distress in Ennis. It states that 200 able-bodied men are out of employment in that town, but I must point out that the object of the grant is to relieve small land-holders and not persons out of work.

Suspension of the Twelve o'Clock Rule.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir W. Harcourt, Derby): I desire to give notice that on Monday next I shall move the Suspension of the Twelve o'clock Rule, with the view of concluding the Debate on the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

RETURN TICKETS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. A. C. Morton, Bill to enable Passengers in Railway Trains and on Steamboats, &c., to make use of Return Tickets at any time after the Date of Issue.

Bill presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 114.]

FOREIGN GOODS (MARK OF ORIGIN) BILL.

On Motion of Colonel Howard Vincent, Bill for the Placing of a Mark of Origin on Foreign Goods.

Bill presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 115.]

PUBLIC HOUSES (HOURS OF CLOSING) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Sir C. Cameron, Bill to Amend the Public Houses (Hours of Closing) (Scotland) Act, 1887.

Bill presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 116.]

ORDER OF THE DAY.

ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO HER MAJESTY'S MOST GRACIOUS SPEECH.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

On the Adjourned Debate upon the Motion that an Address be presented to Her Majesty in reply to the Speech from Throne,

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.) moved the following Amendment:—

> "And we humbly represent to Your Majesty that it is contrary to the public interest that, under the guidance of Your Majesty's advisers, the time of Parliament should be occupied in the discussion of measures which, according to their own statements, there is no prospect of passing into law, while proposals involving grave constitutional changes have been announced on which the judgment of Parliament should be taken without delay."

The right hon. Gentleman said: Mr. Speaker,—Whatever else may be said of the Amendment I have placed on the Paper, I think it will be admitted that it raises a very broad issue, and one which is sufficiently distinct. We desire to challenge the whole Parliamentary tactics of the Government. And especially do we impugn that latest electoral device which is known as "filling the cup," and which consists in wasting the time of the House in the discussion of a number of measures which are not expected to pass, but which are introduced in order to confuse the issues and in order to avoid, or, at all events, to delay, the inevitable condemnation which awaits the primary policy of the Government. I have no right to anticipate a more favourable reception of this Amendment than has been extended to those that have preceded it. We know that hon. Members are very brave in private conversation, and indulge in bursts of independence when they are addressing their own supporters, but when they come to this House their courage oozes out of their finger ends, and, to use an expression of the hon. Member for the Eastern Division of Edinburgh (Mr. R. Wallace), are "called to heel" and follow the indications which are given to them by the Party Whips. Although we do not expect to defeat the Government, we do claim to put our case before the country and to bring to an issue in this House the questions which have been so strenuously discussed on opposing platforms during the Recess. I have said that the Government desire to avoid, or to delay, the condemnation of their primary policy. The first question is, What is the primary policy of this Government? I am glad to say, in regard to that, that we are left in absolutely no doubt whatever, and I am grateful to the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the clearness with which he spoke on the subject on the opening night of the Session. The primary policy of the Government is Home Rule for Ireland. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, with, I think, a trace of pathetic indignation in his voice, said, "You," meaning the Opposition, "appear to think that we shrink from it." I will frankly confess that some of us have that impression. Some of us do think that the Government itself as well as its supporters are rather reluctant to come to the scratch, and we have noticed that in recent elections the Government candidates have had their confession of faith positively wrung from them by main force and the efforts of the Unionist alliance; but after the declaration of the right hon. Gentleman there can be no doubt as to the intentions and policy of the Government. The House will recollect with what gravity, with what emphasis, the Leader of the House read from a document which he held in his hands, the first article, I will not say of a treaty, but of a paper, a portion of which he communicated to the House; and this first article was "We maintain the establishment of Home Rule as our primary policy." My right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary added to that a not unimportant interpretation, because he said, "When we speak of Home Rule we mean Home Rule not falling behind the Bill of 1893." Now, Sir, the Government will not object, I am sure, if we tie them and their supporters to those declarations. "Home Rule for Ireland not falling behind the Bill of 1893" is not merely a part of the Government policy, not merely an item of the Newcastle programme, but it is their primary object. Everything else—Welsh Disestablishment, Local Veto, One Man One Vote—is secondary and subordinate, and everything else will have therefore to be considered not merely in regard to its merits, but in relation to that primary policy which it is the main object of this Government to pursue. Now, I have to make another observation upon this declaration of the Government. I say that in accepting Home Rule as their primary policy at the present time they have put themselves out of harmony with the general opinion of the country. They have no longer a majority behind them, and I do not think that this is a statement which it would be difficult to prove. Will any one pretend that the primary object of the country is Home Rule at the present time? Is there any intelligent or fair-minded man who doubts for a moment that if that were the case, and if, therefore, the Government were certain of a great majority, they would not have appealed to the country when the Home Rule Bill was rejected; I know that the Government say they conld not do that because they were not willing to assent to a claim on the part of the House of Lords to call for a Dissolution. I am not aware that the House of Lords have ever put forward any such claim. All that I understand the House of Lords have claimed is that a Bill which has never been submitted to the people, and which they believe the people would not approve, should be relegated to them for their decision before being passed into law. Be that as it may; I ask again, does anyone imagine that a scruple of that kind would have restrained the Government if they were certain that they would have had a favourable answer to their appeal? Let the House consider the circumstances. The House of Lords rejected this Bill by a majority of ten to one. If the Government believed that, by appealing, they could obtain evidence that the great majority in the country were in favour of the Bill which the House of Lords had so cavalierly rejected, they would have been able to strike a greater blow at the influence of the House of Lords than any Resolution which even their ingenuity could devise. The House of Lords rejected the Home Rule Bill—as the Home Secretary very wisely predicted they would reject it—because it had not been previously submitted to and had not obtained the assent of the people. If the assent of the people had subsequently been given, after an appeal to the people in this issue, we have it on the authority of the Leaders of the House of Lords that they do not contend that they have the right to resist the clearly expressed and definite will of the nation. Therefore, if the Government had believed, if they believe now, that they represent the majority of the United Kingdom, no tactics could have been more foolish, no policy could have been more unjust to the Representatives from Ireland or to the cause which the Government have at heart, than the policy which the Government have actually pursued of refraining from an immediate appeal. If we want any additional proof we find it in the admissions of the Chief Secretary. The House will remember the speech which he delivered the other day, and they will bear me out when I say that not once only, nor twice, nor thrice, but throughout that speech, the Chief Secretary treated the Dissolution of this House as equivalent to the ejection of the Government. They do not believe that they have got a majority any longer, and yet they cling to Office in a minority and attempt to force revolutionary measures upon this House. They know, they have confessed, that the predominant partner is against them, and certainly the predominant partner has not made any progress towards conversion during the course of the last few months. But is there anywhere that kind of enthusiasm in favour of this primary policy of the Government which would overcome the opposition of the predominant partner? Where is it to be found? You find no trace of it in England. Do you find much in Ireland? I think it is one of the most remarkable circumstances of the times—I leave others to explain it—that during the passage of the Home Rule Bill and after its rejection there was not the slightest sign of agitation, of irritation, or of discontent on the part of the Irish people. Since that time there has been no movement which would go to prove that the Irish people were really anxious to secure the success of the Home Rule policy. I do not doubt for a moment that they have what I would call a speculative preference for it, and I do not doubt that at the next election they will still return a great majority of the Representatives. [*Nationalist Cheers.*] Hon. Gentlemen cheered as if they hardly expected it. But for my part I do not entertain the slighest doubt that they will return a large majority of Home Rule Members. But whatever their speculative preference may be, there is no sign of that energy, of that earnestness, of that patriotic zeal, and of that self-devotion which alone can carry through a great constitutional revolution. I will give one illustration of what I say. It is perfectly well known—I do not say it as a taunt, but it is a matter of public notoriety that this agitation has always been more or less in pecuniary difficulties, and from time to time there have been appeals—no English, of course, being allowed to apply—appeals to the patriotism of Irishmen throughout the world. The hon. Member for South Longford was one of the latest to make such an appeal. He went into details. He showed most clearly that the trifling sum of £48,000, applied for purposes which he described, would be sufficient to put the question of Home Rule in a satisfactory position. I think —I will not say I am afraid—that he was not very successful in his appeal which was made to the people of Canada. But what I want the House to see is that that sum, and more than that sum, might have been obtained in Ireland itself if the Irish Nationalist population would have contributed not more than fourpence a head in favour of this great theory of Home Rule. They will not contribute fourpence a head, and the tenants of Ireland who have gained by recent legislation hundreds of thousands of pounds per annum, will not find a sum even of £48,000 in order to get a separate Parliament. We know perfectly well that the Irish people care very much about their land question. They seem to be very enthusiastic indeed. There is every sign of popular feeling upon the subject of Amnesty. We know that a number of them are very much interested in the question of national education, and that others desire that their municipal and purely local government should be put on a solid basis; but there is no sign of any special agitation or interest in the creation of a separate Parliament. If that is the case in Ireland—it is only a negative argument so far as Ireland goes—what is the case in other parts of the United Kingdom? Do you pretend that this enthusiasm for the "primary policy" of your Government, the policy which they are sitting on that Bench alone to carry out, exists in Wales or in Scotland? If it exists in Wales, it must be in the vernacular Press; it is not apparent to the eye of an ordinary Englishman. The Welsh people are very properly engaged in their own affairs, and I do not believe they care—I do not believe they ever have cared—two straws for Irish Home Rule except so far as it had relation to the Parliamentary progress of their own views. Then there is Scotland. I appeal to the Members for Scotland, and I appeal especially to the Members for the Metropolis of Scotland. The case of Scotland is a strong one. On two occasions Scotland by a considerable majority has voted in favour of some kind of Home Rule, although on these occasions the Scotch people were not aware of the particular kind of Home Rule which was going to be proposed. Now, I ask the Members for Edinburgh—Do they say that at the present time the Scotch people are filled with a burning enthusiasm and a fanatical desire to promote the "primary policy" of the Government, and to carry Home Rule on a scale not less than that of the Bill of 1893? We have all read the manly speech of the Member for the Central Division of Edinburgh. I should like to quote to the House two or three words from that speech. The hon. Member, after saying that the Government had left the people under the impression that the Home Rule Bill was not dead, but was in a state of suspended animation, went on to say—

> "I wonder how many men believe anything of the kind. If there are many, I cannot imagine who they are, and I should not know where to find them."

We know where the hon. Gentleman sits. Apparently in that quarter he does not know where to find them.

> "As a matter of fact it is generally believed that the Liberals and Nationalists combined cannot, at least in this generation, carry a Home Rule Bill on the lines of 1893. If that is the fact, why should not the Liberal Party frankly acknowledge it?"

Why not, Sir? Of course it would settle the "primary policy" of the Government, and it might lead to their ejection; but the patriotic gentlemen who sit behind the Government—they put their country far above their Party. Now, here is a very curious fact. The hon. Member for the Central Division made this speech to his constituents in Edinburgh. What happened? Was he howled down? Was he asked to resign? Was he called Judas? No, Sir. As far as I can learn, he received a unanimous vote of thanks and confidence from those whom he addressed. And the same fate befell his colleague, the Member for the Eastern Division, when he pursued the same course. Well, how in these circumstances is it possible for the Government to pretend that they have the country with them? They know perfectly well that the country is against them on this question; that the great majority in England, at any rate, are actively opposed to it; and that the great majority in other parts of the United Kingdom are indifferent. Under these circumstances, I can understand, but I do not admire, the decision of the Government to remain in Office, and I do not think it does them honour. I do not believe that it is in the best interests of the country. But I suppose it will have to be written of this Government, as it has been written of a past Government, that "although they have forgotten how to govern, they have not learned how to resign." What has followed upon the decision of the Government not to appeal to the country, and not to resign after the Home Rule Bill was defeated? It is perfectly clear that they had only one alternative before them, and that alternative they have selected. They had to find a new issue; they had to discover a new cry which might possibly redeem their failure and retrieve their popularity; and they have found that new issue in the good old cry, "Down with the House of Lords." I confess I think they are objects for reasonable sympathy. They had a right to anticipate success from a movement of that kind. They are rather in the position of a dramatic manager who should have produced a new piece with startling effects and sensational incidents which did not take the case of the public. Then, what would he do? He would go to the repertory of the theatre; he would select some classic drama, some popular favourite, and he would bring this out in the hope of redeeming his fortunes and being able to start afresh. That is what the Government have done. They have brought out this favourite piece which on no previous occasion has failed to draw, and on this occasion it has not taken at all. Now why is that? It has been mounted half-a-dozen times, but never before with such shabby accessories and with so weak a company. Sir, all previous agitations against the House of Lords have been accompanied by two conditions. The first condition is, that the House of Commons by a great majority has declared against the course that has been taken by the House of Lords; and the second condition is, that the country has backed up the House of Commons, and by an overwhelming outburst of opinion has shown clearly the drift of public sentiment. But on the present occasion both these conditions are absent. You have not got a large majority in the House of Commons. You have only a small majority, and it is getting smaller every day, and in the country your best efforts, the whole force of your organisation, even all the energy which you could bring to bear has failed to produce a single public meeting of the slightest importance solely on this question. Why is it? The reason is obvious. It is because the country sympathises with the House of Lords in this question, and not with the Government. The House of Lords is declared to be at be the present time the greatest obstacle to Home Rule. Well, the country is not going to abolish the House of Lords because it is the greatest obstacle to Home Rule. Then what has followed? The primary policy of the Government has failed; the secondary policy of the Government has failed. This is a Government of resources; they bring out their tertiary policy, and the tertiary policy is the great policy of filling up the cup. Is it not rather absurd? The cup must be a very capacious one. Think what the House of Lords has done? The House of Lords has upset, has destroyed, has pulverised the primary policy of the Government. Is not that enough? Unfortunately for the Government, it is not, and thereupon they proceed to fill the cup by bringing in measures which they say cannot be passed, and which I say are not intended to be passed, in the hope that, somewhere or other, among the lot, one may be found upon which they can pick a plausible quarrel with the House of Lords. I say that the Government have themselves declared that these measures which they have introduced cannot possibly pass. The other day, when a similar statement was made by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition, the Chancellor of the Exchequer interposed, and he said, "You will not find that in my speeches." Perfectly true. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will excuse me saying so, is an oldish Parliamentary hand, and I do the Chancellor of the Exchequer the justice to say that he knows too much to make any such admission. Then the Chancellor of the Exchequer, although a very important, is not the only, or the most important, Member of the Administration. Other Members have been less reticent than he has been, and notably the Prime Minister himself. Now, Mr. Speaker, when nobody will speak up for the Prime Minister, I am prepared to stand by him. I pin my faith on the Prime Minister, and I am not able to put him aside so cavalierly as his colleague the Chancellor of the Exchequer. After all he is the Prime Minister. Whether he ought to have been the Prime Minister, whether a better man might not have been found, these, Sir, are questions it would be impertinent for me to inquire into, and I should be loth to intrude a profane curiosity into the domestic arcana of Ministerial combination. But, Sir, as long as he is Prime Minister, I think for a short space even the Chancellor of the Exchequer might have patience with him, and for the short space during which he will be Prime Minister he is the only authoritative mouthpiece of this Administration. What does the Prime Minister say? I shall only quote one passage; it is sufficient for my purpose. Speaking at Glasgow on November 15, he said:—

> "What is the use of talking of Liquor Veto, or Disestablishment, or any subject of this kind? I protest that I almost consider I am playing with you when I dilate at such length on such subjects, or on Bills which, in the present condition of Parliament, have no earthly prospect of being passed."

That appears to be clear. I always hesitate in quoting the Prime Minister in consequence of an incident which occurred in the Recess, and I like to assure myself he has not been speaking ironically. On the present occasion there can be no suspicion of that, because what he said at Glasgow he said at Bradford, at Cardiff, and at Edinburgh, and it formed, in fact, one of the great staple arguments of every single speech he delivered. Under these circumstances, I ask the Government how they can pretend that they have not in advance declared that this is to be a sterile Session. I do not refer to other Ministers, although I think some right hon. Gentlemen who sit upon that Bench must feel that they have also made statements similar to that which I have quoted. But I will refer to an observation of my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary. He said the other day that, while admitting the statements of the Prime Minister, he thought circumstances had somewhat changed since. He used very sporting phraseology. Apparently he had no fear of the Anti-Gambling League before his eyes, but he said that he thought the odds had shortened. And why did he think so? Because of a speech made in another place about the Land Bill by the Duke of Devonshire, and because of a letter about Disestablishment written by myself. I think when my right hon. Friend comes to reflect he will find these are rather slender reasons on which to base his conclusions. What did the Duke of Devonshire say? He said that he recognised that it was necessary to bring in a Bill to deal with the circumstances that had resulted from the expiry of the 15 years' period in the Land Act, and he said if that Bill was a fair and a just and reasonable Bill he did not doubt their Lordships would give it favourable consideration. I do not doubt it either. I should suppose that the whole question about the possible success of the Land Bill depends upon two things. It depends upon the nature of the Bill and it depends upon the time at which it is brought in. If that Bill is a non-Party Bill, if it is a fair and just Bill, then I should hope that a difficult question would be settled even in the present Session of Parliament. But if it is a highly controversial Bill, a Bill which is going to raise upon us once more the whole land question, if it is a Bill which is going to deal with evicted tenants, if it is a Bill which is to be brought in at a time when the House has already been engaged in protracted discussions, if there is to be no sufficient time allowed for its consideration and it is to be closured in compartments, then, Sir, in such circumstances I should see little hope to anticipate that the prognostic of the Prime Minister would not be justified. Then, Sir, I come to the letter—the very important letter I think my right hon. friend called it—that I wrote to a gentlemen in Wales. I confess I think my right hon. friend did me and my letter much too great an honour. The letter, I may say in passing, was not intended for publication, but there was nothing in it which was new, which I had not said many times before, and which I am not perfectly prepared to say in public many times again. If I had known, however, that it was to be published without my consent, I should have thought it only fair to say at the same time that these opinions are my personal and individual opinions, and, as far as I know, they are not shared by a single member of the Unionist Party. I expressed in that letter a desire, which I have long entertained, for a compromise on this burning question. I have received the usual reward of would-be peacemakers, and have been roundly abused by both sides, and I must honestly say, in the present temper of Parties, I see not the slighest chance of any compromise being effected. Now, Sir, there is a perfectly frank and perfectly plain statement, and I ask my right hon. friend whether he supposes, in these circumstances, that there is anything in the letter which changes the situation since the Home Secretary said the odds were a hundred to one against the Land Bill, and since the Prime Minister said the Liquor Veto Bill and Disestablishment had no earthly chance of being passed. But, in order to be fair and to deal fully with the Prime Minister's statement, I must bear in mind that he made a very important distinction. He distinguished between those greater measures which have been put forward in the programme of the Government, and which he said had no earthly chance of passing, and the minor measures which have been put into the programme, which are to take the chance of what they can get, and as to which he declared some of them were useful, and, he had a faint hope, might be passed into law. Now, Sir, that depends entirely on the Government; that depends upon whether they are willing to cut their coat according to their cloth. If they are going to proceed with these great controversial measures and only at the end of a long Session to bring in these minor and useful measures, I tell him there is no more chance with them than with the others. If it is their intention to give them the prominence to which they are entitled, then I say that, in the present terrible depression in industry and in agriculture, in view of the distress which, I am afraid, is deepening every day, and which is becoming almost a national calamity, I believe that this House would readily come to the consideration with an open and favourable mind of any remedies the Government might propose, of any social reforms which they might lay before us, without scanning too closely the credentials or questioning the authority of those who proposed them. It lies with the Government, and at present their policy appears to be exactly the reverse. Instead of giving to these measures, which are urgent, these measures which, after all, you cannot deny are the primary policy of the country—for it is to social reform, and to measures affecting the social well-being of the population that the majority in the country are looking—if, instead of giving prominence to these, you are going to deal with those highly contentious and controversial matters until the House has been wearied by the time wasted over sterile discussion, I say you are, with your own hands, destroying all chance you might otherwise have of passing useful and beneficial legislation. It appears as if the Government seems to think that the smaller their majority the more comprehensive and the more controversial ought to be the scheme of their legislation, and if they are ever reduced to that majority of one which Lord Rosebery declares is sufficient for him, I believe there is no interest in the country, and no article of our Constitution, which will be safe at their hands. The other night, the Chief Secretary said that we must make allowance for Party necessity, which is an overmastering element. The policy of the Government is certainly an illustration of his statement; but the course which the Government has taken cannot be held by any impartial man to be a straightforward course. Whatever its intention may be, it must, of necessity, have the effect of diverting attention from the main issues—from the primary policy; and, whenever the appeal to the country does come, it will be, or it may be, indeterminate, because the Government have not chosen to make the issue clear. It seems to me, the position of the Government in introducing these measures is rather like that of another Government, the Melbourne Ministry, in 1841. The condition of the Melbourne Ministry at that period has been very well described in the interesting *History of Our Own Times*, which we owe to the scholarly labour of the hon. Member for North Longford, and the House will excuse me if I quote a few words from his description. He says :—

> "The Melbourne Ministry kept going from bad to worse. There was a great stirring in the country all round them, which made their feebleness the more conspicuous. We sometimes read in history a defence of some particular sovereign whom common opinion cries down, the defence being a reference to the number of excellent measures that were set in motion during his reign. If we were to judge the Melbourne Ministry on the same principle it might seem, indeed, as if their career was one of extraordinary activity and usefulness. Reforms were astir in almost every direction; inquiries into the condition of our poor and our labouring classes were, to use a cant phrase of the time, the order of the day."

That might have been written now. The hon. Member goes on to recapitulate the various measures which the Melbourne Ministry initiated, and then he says :—

> "When they came to the last, when they were in most desperate straits, they resorted to the device of bringing forward a new proposal, which was all the more startling because many of them had previously repudiated it."

And he concludes by saying :—

> "The conversion of the Ministers into the official advocates of a moderate fixed duty"—

for that I should read the abolition of the Second Chamber—

> "was all too sudden for the conscience, for the very stomach, of the nation. Public opinion would not endure it. Nothing but harm came to the Whigs from the attempt. Instead of any new adherents or fresh sympathy being won for them, people only asked, 'Will nothing, then, turn them out of Office; will they never have done with trying new tricks to keep in Office?'"

Mr. Speaker, we know from previous proceedings of the Government that they will not appeal to the country. It is not our object in this Amendment to make them. I am quite certain that if we consulted only our Party interests we should be quite ready to give them more time to try the patience of the country; but our object is—as they have decided to remain, and as they have threatened us with a Revolution—to induce them to submit at once the terms of the Resolution to the House, in order that the House of Commons, in the first instance, and the country afterwards, may have time to give it consideration before they are called upon for a decision. Up to the present time, they have refused to disclose the terms of their Resolution—they have refused to unsheathe this terrible weapon, but they have given a reason for it which does not apply on the present occasion. The reason they have put in the forefront is this. It has been put forward by the Prime Minister in the country, and the other day in another place, that it would not be respectful to the House of Commons to anticipate the production of this Resolution. As I say, that is an excuse which cannot apply any longer. Even they will not assert it is disrespectful to this House to take it into their confidence. And I will venture to put another reason why they should no longer maintain this attitude of pretended mystery; and that is, that their secret is an open secret, and it is disrespectful to this House to refuse an authoritative confirmation of the statements of individual Ministers. During the Recess almost every Minister spoke on this subject, and as, in regard to the other matter with which I have dealt, some Ministers have been less reticent than others, and it is perfectly possible from a collation of these speeches to see exactly the lines on which the Government propose to proceed, I will call the attention of the House to two short extracts. One is from a speech made by the Secretary for War at Culross on the 8th of December. He then said :—

> "The question was, whether the Representative House, which really reflected the opinion of the people of the country, should not be practically supreme, whatever power the other House might be allowed to possess in the way of offering advice as to amendment or alteration that might be required."

And then the other quotation, which carries this a little further, is from a speech of the President of the Board of Trade, who, speaking at Aberdeen, one week later, said :—

> "If you desire my own personal opinion this seems to me the most practical course. The House of Lords may retain the right to suggest amendment and require the reconsideration of a measure, and a certain time might be allowed during which public opinion could express itself, which is a matter of great consequence in a country like ours, where the organs of opinion are so numerous and potent. When that time had elapsed the will of the people, if again expressed through their representatives, would prevail."

Now, can there be any doubt whatever as to the interpretation to be placed on these two statements? The House of Lords under these circumstances is to remain as an advisory body. It is not to have any power to veto Bills, it is not to have any power to insist on any amendment, it is not to have any power to call for a dissolution; but it may suggest amendments or advise the House of Commons, and if the House of Commons does not care to follow its advice then the Bill will be passed exactly in the form in which the House of Commons desire it. The first remark I make on that is, that I am surprised such a proposal should come to us from the President of the Board of Trade. When we completed the discussion on the Home Rule Bill I thought we should not have occasion for a considerable time to refer to the authoritative statements on constitutional questions which we alluded to so often in the course of that Debate, but it appears we shall still have reason to go to our old friend, "The American Commonwealth." What does the right hon. Gentleman say in "The American Commonwealth?" He says :—

> "It is only now that the belated philosophers of England have come to the conclusion that what is required is, that the House of Lords should not be weaker but should be stronger."

Well, I confess I do respectfully express my regret that the President of the Board of Trade should have joined the "belated philosophers." But the second observation is this. This proposal, as defined by the Secretary for War and the President of the Board of Trade, is nothing more nor less than the resolution of the Leeds Conference. So far everything would be straightforward and plain; but the curious fact is, the Prime Minister has ridiculed and criticised the resolution of the Leeds Conference. He said, to destroy the veto of the House of Lords and prevent it having power of revision, would be to put it in a position in which it would be no use at all. He said in that case it would only remain as a court of justice and as a state prison for able and eminent men. He forgot one of the functions which even then it would continue most usefully to fulfill—I mean that of a haven of refuge for able and eminent Members of the Liberal party. Lord Rosebery's argument was, that to do these things which the Secretary for War proposes to do, would be equivalent to the abolition of the House of Lords, and then he went on to say he was a Second Chamber man, that he would have no part or parcel in handing over the Government of this country to the sole control of a Single Chamber. I do not say these observations of the Prime Minister are necessarily inconsistent with the other statements of Cabinet Ministers to which I have referred. I say, however, that they are very difficult to reconcile. I say that the Government alone have the clue to the mystery, and that therefore we have some reason when we ask them to enlighten us and to put an end to all doubts upon the subject. Why do they not do so? Lord Rosebery himself has shown on many occasions that he feels some necessity or some satisfactory justification of conduct which otherwise appears unexplainable. He has given us, as I have shown, one reason which no longer applies. What is the other reason? I say the reason is that the introduction of a Resolution of this kind must shortly be followed by a Resolution, and that it would be hard to punish the House of Commons. Why is he so tender-hearted for the House of Commons? When it is known to all that if the Government adhere to their principles the days of this House are limited, it may be to two or three months, or it may be even to two or three weeks, why does he think that we should pass this time in what he himself has pointed out must be a barren discussion? Why does he think that we cling to a precarious and inglorious existence? If he has any doubt on the point, we will tell him that the half of the House of Commons, or nearly half the House of Commons, are anxious for a Dissolution. We can tell him that as to the remainder there are many, at all events, among them who feel that they have no longer strength sufficient to perform their work with efficiency, and would like to end what is an undignified position. Mr. Speaker, this Government is tottering. It can no longer represent with proper weight the interests of this country in the councils of Europe. It has not force behind it to enable it to pass its domestic policy into law. Lord Rosebery himself has appealed to the nation to give him what he calls the propelling power. I wish he would give the nation a chance. There are several kinds of propulsion. I think myself that considerable force was exercised the other day in Forfarshire, in Brigg, and in Evesham. But perhaps in those cases—

> "We kicked them downstairs with such a sweet grace
> That they thought we were handing them up."

If that is so, I invite them to play their last card. I invite them to submit to the decision of this House their Constitutional Revolution; and I invite them, above all, no longer to shrink from the inevitable plunge, which will only be the more disagreeable the longer it is delayed.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. H. H. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): Mr. Speaker, there is one passage in the speech of my right hon. Friend for which I think, on behalf of the Government, I ought at once to tender him our grateful acknowledgements. I refer to the comparison which he made between the position of Her Majesty's present advisers and that of the administration of Lord Melbourne. Lord Melbourne's Government was supported in this House by a small but adequate majority. It constantly encountered the hostility of the House of Lords in the rejection, the obstruction, and the mutilation of its Bills; and at the end of its career, as my right hon. Friend has thought it opportune to remind us, it undertook for the first time a new departure in the assault upon the Corn Laws. My right hon. Friend apparently thinks that that is fit to compare with the attack which we are about to institute upon the House of Lords. Sir, how long, let me ask, did the Corn Laws survive that new departure upon the part of Lord Melbourne's Government? Precisely five years, and we now know the estimate which my right hon. Friend is prepared to give of the probable duration of the existing constitution of the House of Lords. Mr. Speaker, this Amendment is the third vote of censure upon Her Majesty's Government in support of which the combined forces of the Opposition have been arrayed during the present Debate; and I think, particularly after some remarks that have fallen from my right hon. Friend, it might not be uninstructive to recall to the attention of the House the different varieties and phases of attitude which the Opposition has assumed in the course of the last few days. The attack began, Sir, from what I may call the regular Opposition with the Motion of the hon. Member for Hampshire, who asked the House to say that immediate legislation was required for the urgent needs of suffering Agriculture, with a happy afterthought for the unemployed. He was followed by the newest, but certainly not the least active, recruit to the ranks of the Opposition, the hon. and learned Member for Waterford.

MR. J. REDMOND: I have always been in Opposition since I came into this House.

*MR. ASQUITH: The hon. Member demanded an immediate Dissolution of Parliament in order that the opinion of the country might be taken upon the question of Home Rule. And now, Sir, the same hon. Gentlemen, who have voted in the course of a single week, first for immediate legislation for Agriculture, and then for an immediate dissolution upon Home Rule, are invited to-night by the Leader of the only remaining section of the Opposition to ask the Government to re-arrange the whole of their Sessional programme, to put upon one side all the measures of legislation announced in the Speech from the Throne, in order that we may do what? [An hon. MEMBER: "Resign."] Not at all. The hon. Gentleman has misinterpreted the Amendment. And I must confess that during the greater part of my right hon. Friend's speech I thought he had not read the Amendment. No; we are to put aside all these measures of promised legislation in order that this House may enter at once, and without delay, upon the discussion of a new constitutional question. Now, what is the position of the Opposition in relation to this matter? Although it is not for us to criticise, or at any rate to quarrel with, their tactics, I confess I could not help thinking that there was something a little peculiar in the arrangement which assigned to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham the authorship of this particular Amendment. Of course, Sir, I need not remind my right hon. Friend nor the House that the first measure to which, as soon as we are allowed to approach the transaction of the real business of the country—the first measure to which the attention of this House will be invited is the Bill for the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Welsh Church. We know my right hon. Friend's position in relation to that question. He has told the world more than once, I think, that if he had his own way Welsh Disestablishment would have had the first place in the unauthorised programme of 1885. He warned the people of Wales, in well-remembered language, before the las General Election, that every Welsh dissenter who voted for a Gladstonian was voting for the indefinite postponement of Welsh Disestablishment. He told the people of Wales, I think it was about the same time, that the great Constitutional question involved in Home Rule must for years to come occupy all our time. He drew a pathetic picture—I am quoting from memory, but I think my memory is accurate—of the Welsh and Scotch Churches, as a pair of sisters, waiting in the Lobby disconsolately for the hour of their Disendowment, while this House was engaged in wrangling and jangling over the details of Home Rule. My right hon. Friend has now the opportunity of giving effect to these promises to the Welsh people.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: The Prime Minister said the Bill has no earthly chance of being passed.

*MR. ASQUITH: This Parliament has not yet sat three years, and already Welsh Disestablishment, which my right hon. Friend ten years ago thought the most urgent of political questions, is to be the first measure to be submitted to the House of Commons. Yet at thit moment my right hon. Friend thinks is right to undertake the sponsorship of a resolution which asks this House to put aside that measure. And why? In order that this House may engage in another Constitutional controversy now that Home Rule is, at least for a time, out of the way. I cannot think that my right hon. Friend can have had these considerations in view, or very closely in view, when he undertook the authorship of this Amendment; and speculating, as I have been compelled to speculate, as to what his precise motive may have been, I think the most plausible explanation of his action is a desire that the question of the House of Lords should as soon as possible be brought upon the floor of the House in order that he may give to the country, whose curiosity upon the subject is vivid and real, some explanation of his own previous declarations. Now, Sir, I am not going to indulge in quotations. My right hon. Friend has been sparing in that respect, and I will follow his example. I am not going to indulge in a wealth of quotation. I will content myself with citing a single passage from the speech delivered by him—and it is most pertinent to the question now before the House—in Denbighshire, before the General Election of 1885. These were the memorable words he used:—

> "I have no spite against the House of Lords, but as a Dissenter I have an account to settle with them, and I promise you I will not forget the reckoning. I share your hopes and aspirations, and I resent the insults, injuries, and the injustice from which you have suffered so long at the hands of a privileged Assembly."

I ask the particular attention of the House to the words which follow:—"But the cup is nearly full." Yes, Sir, filling the cup, the right hon. Gentleman told us to-night, was the latest electoral device. It is at least ten years old, and the credit for the introduction into our political vocabulary of this most useful and picturesque simile ought, I think, to be claimed by its true and original author. "Yes," he went on,

> "—the cup is nearly full. The career of high-handed wrong is coming to an end. We have been too long a Peer-ridden nation."

Now, Sir, I should be glad to know, and the House would be glad to know—and if the discussion could be confined within reasonable limits I am not sure that we ought not to allow facilities for the purpose—what my right hon. Friend thinks has happened to the cup which was nearly full in 1885, and how he explains that in his view the House of Lords, which, as he told the electors then, had "sheltered every abuse and protected every privilege for nearly a century," has become, as he apparently thinks it has, the last refuge of popular liberty. But I am afraid that we must postpone the gratification of our curiosity upon this point, and I will ask the House, for the very few minutes during which I address it, to examine what are the reasons which my right hon. Friend alleges for the Amendment he proposes. He founds himself entirely, as far as I can make out, upon our declarations, or supposed declarations, that certain measures announced in the Queen's Speech as about to be submitted to this House have little prospect of being carried into law during the present Session, and upon the inference which he draws from those declarations, and which I shall show to be totally unfounded, that it necessarily follows that the time and attention of this House expended on these measures is a futile and fruitless expenditure of time and labour. My right hon. Friend has quoted certain statements made by the Prime Minister as to the improbability of the Welsh Disestablishment Bill, and of one or two other Bills, being passed into law this year. He has spared me—and I am obliged to him for it—what I confess I expected, the repetition of an expression of mine which I used at Birmingham and which has acquired, I observe, a certain transient notoriety, about "ploughing the sand." That poor little phrase has afforded, I am glad to say, meat and drink to the Unionist Party for the last two months. And not only to the Unionist Party, but to the Parnellite Party also. These new comrades—[*Opposition Cries of* "Oh!" *and Ministerial Cheers*]. I confess I was not prepared for such a manifestation of ingratitude. How many nights ago is it since hon. Gentlemen opposite followed the hon. member for Waterford into the lobby? These new comrades are rapidly learning to sit down without the least awkwardness at the same political table. [Mr. W. REDMOND: "We want to release our country."] I confess that I for my part do not grudge hon. Gentlemen opposite the slender contribution which I have been privileged to make to their rhetorical and argumentative necessities. As regards the use of that phrase, and as regards the corresponding declarations which my right hon. Friend has quoted from the Prime Minister, I and my colleagues are wholly impenitent. I believe that it was perfectly true when I spoke at Birmingham, where the expression was first used; it was a perfectly true and accurate thing to say that, forecasting the probable action of the House of Lords in the future by their actual conduct in the past, the prospect of a measure like Welsh Disestablishment receiving the Royal Assent during the present Session was a remote prospect. How could I expect that the House of Lords would show any more deference to the opinions of the Welsh people in reference to their ecclesiastical institutions than it had shown to the opinions of the Irish people in respect of their civil and political institutions? But I did hope, until I listened to what fell from my right hon. Friend to-night, that a ray of light had penetrated the gloom. I confess that, like the Chief Secretary, when I read the letter which, it appears, was not intended for publication, though it seems to have been addressed to the editor of a newspaper, I did hope that there was some prospect in this matter of Welsh Disestablishment that we might not again plough the sand. My right hon. Friend has kindly declared that he will not intrude a "profane curiosity" into what he supposes to be our domestic difficulties. I will repay the compliment, and I will not inquire too closely as to what are the precise relations of the two parties which are separated, as we know, by a thin partition, and as to what kind of response is going to be made on the one side of the partition to the voice which appeals from the other side, in accents of warning and almost, I may say, of menace. My right hon. Friend says in his letter that—

"Disestablishment in Wales must come; and the only question is whether it shall be accompanied by a just treatment of the Church in regard to its funds. This can be secured now. If Churchmen would be wise they would urge their leaders to devote themselves to this part of the subject."

I heard the other night, in the speech of the right hon. Member for St. George's, a passage of almost, I was going to say, convulsive emotion, in which he elicited the enthusiastic applause of the Gentlemen who sit behind him by a withering reference to those who were engaged, or about to be engaged, in "the plunder of the Welsh Church." That was the right hon. Gentleman's expression. I took particular note of it. Although I do not doubt that it is in strict consonance with the feelings and convictions of the majority of those who sit behind him, it appeared to me that they were somewhat strange and incongruous words to fall from the lips of a Member of the Cabinet of 1869—one of the authors of the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Irish Church. However, my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham advises the right hon. Member for St. George's and his followers to compromise with sacrilege. They are to drive the best bargain they can with the unclean thing. Are you going to take his advice? I get no response, yet surely this has a most vital bearing on the Amendment which is now before the House. Talk about "ploughing the sand!" It rests with my right hon. Friend and with those in whose counsels he exercises such a weighty and just authority—it rests with them to make the desert, if I may use the expression, "blossom like the rose." In this House, Sir, I am thankful to say that the prospects of a Welsh Disestablishment Bill are perfectly assured. There is, as far as we can forecast the future, not the least chance of its being defeated by the Representatives of the people. Let my right hon. Friend, who gives such sound and sagacious advice to his political allies, make his advice effective in that quarter where he can make it effective if he pleases, and let him get his Liberal Unionist Friends in the House of Lords to declare themselves on the side of religious equality in Wales, and I for my part shall not despair that, even during the course of the present Session, we may find that great and long-delayed Measure, which ten years ago, according to my right hon. Friend, was a "most urgent and paramount measure of political reform," has at last been passed into law. I will carry the matter further. I will assume that, not through any action of this House, but through the action of another place, this Bill and other Bills announced from the Throne are not to be carried into law during the present Session. Is that any reason why we should not introduce them? Is that any ground for my right hon. Friend's allegation, or assumption rather, which pervaded the whole of his speech, that if you cannot carry a Bill into law it is so much wasted time to bring it before the House of Commons. I am not of that opinion. In the first place, it is the duty of a responsible Government, which has come into power on definite pledges and promises to the people of this country, as far as its opportunities allow, and within the limits of its constitutional powers, to redeem those pledges and fulfil those promises by every means which the law allows. My right hon. Friend speaks of Home Rule, and quotes a phrase of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to which I entirely subscribe, that that is the primary policy of Her Majesty's Government. Yes, Sir, but the primary policy is not the same thing as the exclusive policy. By way of parenthesis, I must pause for a moment when my right hon. Friend tells us that this primary policy of ours is hopelessly discredited and defeated; and the House will allow me to analyse the argument used by my right hon. Friend in support of that proposition. "Why, in the first place," he says, "the Irish themselves have ceased to care for Home Rule!" What is his evidence for that extraordinary and somewhat bold proposition? Why, that Ireland is quiet, and there is no crime, outrage, or agitation in Ireland.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: I beg my right hon. Friend's pardon, but that is a little too important to be allowed to pass. I did not allude either directly or indirectly to crime or outrage.

*MR. ASQUITH: I accept the correction. My right hon. Friend did, however, allude to agitation; and, further, he said that the Irish people have not subscribed at the rate of 4d. a head to Home Rule. I wonder whether the Unionist supporters of the right hon. Gentleman, either in Ireland or elsewhere, would stand that test. I take the negative evidence which the right hon. Gentleman derives from the absence of agitation and from the failure of the Irish people to make this pecuniary contribution, and I put it against what to my mind is a far more important admission—namely, that at the next general election, as at the last, according to the right hon. Gentleman's calculation, the vast majority of the Irish representatives will be in favour of Home Rule. For our part we look at the freely chosen representatives of the people, as the only constitutional organ for the ascertainment of their wishes. Then my right hon. Friend goes on to Wales and tell us, without any particular evidence beyond his own opinion, that the Welsh have never cared for Home Rule. Out of 34 members returned by Wales I believe there are only two who voted against the Home Rule Bill; and I am certain that hon. Gentlemen opposite will bear their testimony to the declaration that no more zealous and assiduous friends exist of the great national cause in which they are engaged than their fellow-subjects in the principality. Finally, my right hon. Friend proceeds to Scotland; and we are told that now the Scottish Members have ceased to be interested in Home Rule, this opinion being arrived at by referring to a speech recently delivered by my hon. Friend the member for the Central Division of Edinburgh (Mr. M'Ewan) and another speech in somewhat the same sense delivered by one of his colleagues in the representation of that city. My right hon. Friend, as he always does, made the most of those two declarations; and the House might have drawn the inference from the references that the two hon. Members had ceased to be Home Rulers, and had no interest whatever in that question. Unfortunately for my right hon. Friend's conclusion, I find that one of the hon. Members in question—the Member for the Central Division—has only to-day written a letter in which he explains his position in clear and categorical language. He is asked this question:—

> "The Advanced Liberal Association of the Central Division would like a categorical answer to the following question—'Would you loyally support a Home Rule Bill embodying the principles of Mr. Gladstone's policy if brought in by the Liberal Party?'"

The hon. Member replies:—

> "As Mr. Gladstone's policy is simply to give effect to Irish aspirations by granting them a Parliament to deal with Irish affairs, and I have so frequently expressed my sympathy with this object, both in speech and letter, I have no hesitation in answering 'Yes,' without, of course, committing myself to the details of a Bill not yet in existence."

So that the one witness which my right hon. Friend cites to show the backsliding of Scotland from Home Rule is the witness who, in answer to a categorical question, declares that he is now, and always has been, a supporter of the principle. When I turned aside for a moment to deal with that argument I was saying that, in my view—and, I believe, in the view of the Government—we are bound to prosecute so long as we retain the confidence of the House of Commons the policy which we deliberately submitted to the electors, and which the electors approved at the General Election of 1892. I do not in the least agree that the sole test of the occupation of Parliamentary time is whether the Government is successful in bringing a Bill in and passing it into law in a Session. It is often of the greatest importance—I believe in the case of Welsh Disestablishment it is of vital importance—that the actual practical working of the scheme should be laid before this House and discussed in all its details, and, if necessary, recast and amended where it needs it, and then finally receive the sanction of the representatives of the people. Does any man mean to tell me if those stages are gone on with in the case of Welsh Disestablishment that the question will not be advanced a long and important stage? ["No, no!" *and a Voice on the Front Opposition Bench,* "Home Rule!"] The right hon. Gentleman quotes the case of the Home Rule Bill. Is there any intelligent and dispassionate critic of public affairs in this country who does not know that the position of the Home Rule question is vitally different now from what it actually was, now that an actual Home Rule Bill has received the assent of this House, and different in the sense of being appreciably nearer realisation? Lastly, with reference to these points, the right hon. Gentleman's contention is, that we are not to occupy our time usefully here, that we cannot occupy our time usefully here, so long as a Liberal Government is in Office and a Liberal majority exists in the House of Commons, unless we concentrate all our energies and devote the whole of our working hours to those minor, non-party, non-controversial measures which the House of Lords is good enough to allow us to deal with. I would appeal to my right hon. Friend as to the somewhat unequal distribution of power between the two Houses. A Conservative majority and a Conservative Government on these benches may carry without let or hindrance every measure they have submitted to the electors and which their Party desires. But reverse the position, and place the Conservatives opposite and the Liberals on the Government benches, and what does my right hon. Friend find? That we have to cut our coat according to our cloth, or, in other words, that we are to prove false to the pledges which we gave at the election, that we are to abandon what in our view and judgment are great and vital measures of political and social reform, to content ourselves with a humdrum, hand-to-mouth, unambitious policy in order not to offend the susceptibilities and not to ruffle the pride of the irresponsible, hereditary House. That is not the policy of Her Majesty's present advisers. So long as we retain the confidence of this House we shall continue to prosecute to the end whatever remains uncompleted of the task which we believe was entrusted to us by the constituencies of the country; and if we are, by action for which we are not responsible, by forces over which we have no control, prevented from making those efforts fruitful in immediate legislation, we at least shall have the satisfaction of knowing that we have done our best to deserve the confidence reposed in us, and we shall appeal without fear for a renewal of that confidence when, and not before, that task is finished.

Mr. J. GRANT LAWSON (York, N.R., Thirsk) said, that when the question of the House of Lords came up for discussion it would be discussed, not according to what the opinions of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham were 10 years ago, and what was the action of the House of Lords 10 years ago, but upon the action of the House of Lords at present, and according to the opinions of the present Ministry upon it. He noticed, however, that the question of the House of Lords had receded into the dim and distant future. Was the question of the House of Lords postponed until the whole of the Newcastle programme was passed through the House? If that was so, then the chance of reaching the reform of the House of Lords was very remote indeed. The right hon. Gentleman appeared to miss the point of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham's Amendment. In 1892 the Home Secretary, in proposing an Amendment to the Address, said that the Address was rather in the nature of grace before meat. Did the right hon. Gentleman expect the House to be thankful for that which they were not about to receive? The point of the present Amendment was that the House was not about to receive those measures which the Address called upon it to be thankful for. In supporting the Amendment he desired to place himself in the position of a Member of the Ministerial Party and to see how they regarded the present plan of campaign of the Ministry. Lord Rosebery some years ago spoke in Scotland in a spirit of prophecy practically in favour of his right hon. Friend's Amendment. That speech might have been forgotten if the Prime Minister had not referred to it again at Bradford in terms of self-commendation. In that speech the Prime Minister asserted that it was a foolish proceeding to do exactly what the Government were now doing. He had found the speech by searching in the political dustbin; it was made at a National Conference of Liberal Associations in Glasgow, in November, 1889, at which the Prime Minister took the chair. Lord Rosebery on that occasion declared that one great obstacle to all Parliamentary legislation was the House of Lords, and he spoke of a drastic reform with reference to the other House. Lord Rosebery went on to say that their programme would be maimed and crippled, and he invited the assistance of his supporters. No reason had been given why the campaign had not been commenced against the House of Lords. To raise a great issue in the country and then to proceed with other business was absolutely without precedent. There were few crises which could be compared with the great change in their constitution proposed to be made by the Government, but he thought he might fairly take the case of Catholic Emancipation. The policy was adopted, and in 1829 the King's Speech referred to nothing else but Foreign Affairs and Catholic Emancipation. Again, in 1831, when Reform was the question, and to this the greatest prominence was given. The same thing occurred in 1846, with regard to the Corn Laws. The Government seemed to think they could throw down the House of Lords as easily as the Corn

Laws were thrown down, but how long had the Corn Laws stood, and how long had the House of Lords stood? The Corn Laws were thrown down because the Government had the people behind them. Had the present Government the people behind them? If so, why not appeal to the people? In 1846, Sir Robert Peel, in the Speech dealt with nothing else but the relaxation of Protective Duties, and this had been the practice of Ministers before the Queen's Speech was turned into a sort of Party prospectus, to cheat unwary investors of their votes. It had been left to the present Government to be the first to bring in Bills which they predicted would not pass. Mr. Gladstone, in 1869, and Lord Granville again, in 1880, said that by using menace they were inviting the House of Lords to reject their measures. The Home Secretary had referred to the letter of the hon. Member for Central Edinburgh, but he had not read the last sentence of that letter. The hon. Member refused to pledge himself to the details of a measure which he had not seen. Yet, the Government asked Members to pledge themselves to an attack on the Constitution of which they had seen no details. The hon. Baronet (Sir Wilfrid Lawson) writing to the *Daily News*, condemned the policy of the Government in keeping back their Resolution, and in pressing on measures which they said would not pass. Depending on the chapter of accidents, said the hon Baronet, was the gospel of fools. The policy of the Government, he further said, was no less intolerable than it was absurd, and he objected to their wearing out their lives in dealing with measures which they knew would not pass into law. The hon. Baronet went on to say—

> "The proceedings of the House of Commons always reminds me of a gamekeeper rearing pheasants in order that when they reach maturity they may be shot."

That was hardly a proper comparison, for a pheasant when shot was of some value, but an immature measure was of no good to anybody. It would be a more correct simile to compare the action of the present Government to a gamekeeper setting a hen on eggs which he knew to be addled. The hon. Baronet said, speaking of the Bills mentioned in the Queen's Speech, and addressing the editor of the *Daily News*—

> "These are exactly the class of Bills the Lords most fear and dislike, and what you recommend to us is to lay ourselves out to pass them through the House of Commons and send them their doom in the Lords. Let us remove the shoal before we have wrecked several more ships upon it."

That was valuable and candid advice at all events. "Is it not better," said the hon. Baronet,

> "—to secure the means of obtaining our object rather than to run with our eyes open in hopeless difficulties."

So that in the opinion of one of the most consistent supporters of Her Majesty's Government they were now running now into hopeless difficulties. They had talked in the country to many audiences of an indelible resolution; but looking at the programme set forth by the Government, that indelible resolution must be written in invisible ink, for it nowhere appeared on the programme. When they came to the House of Commons they had no indelible resolution presented to them. They had not even the transitory Amendment of the hon. Member for Northampton, which gave the Government so much distress at the end of last Session. Instead they had a Queen's Speech, bristling with measures, a speech to which Ministers were writing postscripts day after day in answer to questions, and at the end of all they were to come to what the Government themselves declared to be the question of the hour. This policy of concealment could only have one object, and that was, to retain, if possible, the votes of some of their supporters unfairly and to confuse the issue before the country. The Government had thrown down the gauntlet and his right hon. Friend had taken it up. The lists were set, and all were waiting for the Government to come in and take up the challenge offered. Instead of their doing so they found them adopting the principle laid down in comic poetry, and they say "the time has come to talk of many things," but not of the indelible resolution they had flaunted before the country. That was a method only worthy of a Home Rule advocate endeavouring to avoid a discussion on Home Rule. The Government considered that the time had not come, that the cup was not full.

If their words against the House of Lords were justified, let them come forward openly and declare their intentions. If they maintained that their quarrel was just let them forthwith put the matter to the test. If they did so he was sure that the challenge would be taken up and that everyone would join in saying : "God defend the right."

MR. H. LABOUCHERE (Northampton), said that the right hon. Member for Birmingham gave at the commencement of his speech a reason why no Member of the Radical Party should vote in favour of his Amendment. He said the only question he wished to raise was an objection to the tactical conduct of Her Majesty's Government. It seemed to him that the heads of a Party, particularly when in Office, ought to be left a perfectly free hand with regard to all matters appertaining to tactics, just as passengers in a ship ought to leave to the mariners all matters concerning navigation ; but when a passenger saw, or imagined that he saw, that the captain was steering among quicksands and rocks, at least it was his right, and almost his duty, to point out respectfully that that was not precisely the way to reach the port to which the ship was destined. The right hon. Gentleman seemed to be under the impression that the Radical fibre of the country was somewhat weakening. He thought that the right hon. Gentleman was mistaken. He believed they were all as sound Radicals as they ever were ; but he was bound to say that there were some reasons why, perhaps, the Radical Party was not in so prosperous a condition as it was a year ago. It was not because they loved the Government less that the Radicals loved the Unionists more. A good deal had been changed in the course of last year. This time last year they had, as Leader of their Party, a man of the ripest experience, whose personal influence over the mind of the country had not been exceeded by any one of the present generation, and who to this added great powers as a Parliamentary tactician. When he withdrew, a Leader was planted upon them who certainly had the disadvantage, which every one must admit was a disadvantage in the leader of the Radical Party, of being a Member of the House of Lords. They were told that this disadvantage was outweighed by the fact of the particular Peer being a man of such transcendent wisdom, and of such abnormal talents, that it were better in their interests that he should be taken as their Leader rather than any of the eminent Gentlemen who had been his colleagues, and sat on the Treasury Bench, every one of whom, he thought, was better fitted for the position. Whether experience had proved, or not, that it was wise to take this gentleman was for every one to form his own opinion. He only wished to say that the Radical Party was not responsible for the selection ; and it was very evident that a reversal of the system that had been pursued by the Liberal Party since 1831, with the exception of only two or three months, of having their Leader in the House of Commons, could not have been very agreeable to every Radical in the country. But not only was the Leader changed, but the official policy of the Party was changed also. In Foreign Affairs there were two phases of thought, Jingoism and anti-Jingoism. The leaders of the anti-Jingoes were the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian, the Irish Secretary, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. They were told by their new Leader that a new doctrine ought to be inaugurated—the doctrine of continuity in our foreign policy, and, in order to carry that out, as the Jingoes would not come over to them, they were to go over to the Jingoes ; that was to say, that the doctrine was so excellent that they were to purchase it at the entire sacrifice of all their principles. Moreover, with regard to foreign politics, they had, for the first time for a very long while, a Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary sitting in the House of Peers, and it was obvious that, so long as that continued, the House of Commons lost all direct control over the Foreign Policy of the Country. They had absolutely no more to do with it than with the movement of the heavenly bodies. With regard to Home Rule there had been undoubtedly a change in the attitude of Liberal officialdom. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian acted on the view that if there was an elected majority from all parts of the country, a Home Rule Bill ought to be brought into the House, passed, and sent up to the House of Lords. He did that, and the Bill was thrown out by the

House of Lords. Since then they have been told that no Bill could be expected to pass unless there was not only a majority of the Electors of the United Kingdom in its favour, but a majority of the electors of England, which was, as they were told, the dominant partner. It seemed to him that this view entirely justified the House of Lords in their action. No one could contend that there had not been a change of policy on the part of Liberal officialdom, both in foreign policy and on Home Rule. Was it surprising, therefore, that Radicals still remaining sound to Radical principles were not absolutely wild in their enthusiasm for what was called a Radical Government? With regard to the House of Lords they had seen somewhat the same result. The Radicals have long held that no man, unless elected thereto by the votes of all persons who possessed the Parliamentary Franchise, ought to exercise any legislative function; and that no democratic legislation was possible until that reform had been made in our Parliamentary system. He had often himself raised this issue in Parliament. When first he raised it there were exceedingly few who followed him, but in the last Parliament, when he moved a resolution embodying Radical views, he had the pleasure of being supported by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Irish Secretary; in fact, every Liberal or Radical who happened to be in the House voted with him. When they came into power he said, "Thank Heaven; now they are able to reflect their views and my views." The first Session was taken up by Home Rule. In the second Session, not only did they not announce that they were prepared to give effect to those views, but, when he moved a motion identical with that they had voted for when out of Office, they became recalcitrant, and, in fact, they voted against him. But, notwithstanding the fact that they were aided by the Conservative Opposition, he had the satisfaction of carrying that Resolution. It was true it was not embodied in the Address sent up to the Queen, but he knew that the Resolution had been passed by that House, and that the record of the fact could not be wiped out. No doubt it was felt that something must be done to meet what were thus stated to be the views of that House, and what were certainly the views of almost every Radical out of the House; and the Prime Minister asked for guidance and inspiration. The Radicals were always ready to tender to their Leaders guidance and inspiration; and without a moment's hesitation the National Liberal Federation, the great Parliament of the Liberal Party, to which it owed the Newcastle Programme, met at Leeds and gave the Prime Minister the guidance for which he asked. It was that every Bill passed by the Commons, whether the Lords liked it or not, after it had been passed a second time in the same Session by the Commons, should become the law of the land in that Session. Personally, he should have preferred that the Liberal Parliament should have passed a more stringent Resolution in favour of abolishing the House of Lords; but he was a loyal Member of his Party, and he loyally accepted the Leeds Resolution. He did so to a certain extent because he could not perceive that there was any real and substantial difference between what he wanted, the abolition of the House of Lords, and the proposal embodied in the Leeds Resolution. If that Resolution became law the House of Commons would be absolutely uncontrolled, and the Lords would have no more legislative power than Her Majesty's Beefeaters or any such body of men. The Prime Minister, upon receiving the asked-for guidance and inspiration, at once took the field in person; but to their surprise this Telemachus refused to accept the advice of his mentors. He declared himself against the Resolution; he went further and ridiculed the Resolution, and he said he was perfectly certain that the House of Lords would not assent to it. Did the Prime Minister suppose they at Leeds ever thought the House of Lords would assent to it? They intended that the will of the people should be dominant, whether the House of Lords assented or they did not. They knew perfectly well that the House of Lords would not assent to it. It might be fairly said that, whatever the Prime Minister was for, he was not in favour of the Leeds Resolution, and that seemed to indicate a certain amount of cleavage between the Leader and the Party of which he was supposed to be the Leader. What were the views of the Prime

Minister? The right hon. Member for West Birmingham said they were no secret, but for himself he had failed to discover. To him it seemed that the Prime Minister's utterances had been entirely contradictory; the matter had been complicated by a sort of Jekyll and Hyde mode of speaking. The Prime Minister had said that at one moment he spoke as a man and at another moment as a Minister; and the Minister was always contradicting the man and the man contradicting the Minister. The Prime Minister intended to maintain the present position of the House of Lords, with its hereditary Peers and its Bishops; he was going to readjust the relations between the two Houses, but he did not make it very clear what the readjustment was to be. To the uncontrolled exercise of power on the part of one Chamber the Prime Minister said he would never consent; but he contemplated depriving the House of Lords of control. Where, then, would he get control over the Commons? The two propositions seemed to be absolutely antagonistic. It was as difficult to reconcile the utterances of the Prime Minister as it was to reconcile the apparent inconsistencies of the Athanasian Creed. Did his colleagues throw any light on the views of the Prime Minister? There were two most eminent colleagues, for whom he had a special admiration; but comparisons were invidious, and he would go no further. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was too wise to say anything; and the Chief Secretary for Ireland, who had held strong views on the question, followed the excellent example of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and he could not make much out of the speeches of their colleagues, for each had appeared to speak as a man and not as a Minister. The most satisfactory speech was made by the Home Secretary, but he was entirely at variance with what had been gathered from the speeches of the Prime Minister. That the Prime Minister should maintain this singular mystery out of respect for the House of Commons was a most astounding theory, for no one wanted to know the exact words of the Resolution he intended to submit to the House, while all were curious to know what was the substance of it. Personally he waited patiently, thinking he should get to know all when Parliament met. It met rather late, and it ought to have met earlier if the Government wanted to do business. The Queen's Speech, however, did not help him, for, although it went into many details, it did not say a word about this wondrous revolutionary Resolution that was to be submitted to the House of Commons. He should like to know whether that Resolution was to be proposed in the present Session; if so, why no mention was made of it in the Address; and, if not, why it was not to be proposed this Session, and when it was to be proposed. Although the Prime Minister spoke of it as a tremendous revolution he was as reticent about it as if it were a Guy Fawkes plot. The Prime Minister came forward into the lists, threw down his glove, and challenged anyone to take it up; and, when some one did take it up, he walked off and said, "I will come at another time." We were not accustomed to these things on the part of statesmen; we appreciated them from the clown in the circus. Perhaps curious memoirs to be read by a later generation would disclose whether the Resolution had ever been proposed in the Cabinet, whether it had ever been discussed, and whether all that had ever been done was to defer the discussion to a more convenient season. This was a case in which there were absolute inconsistencies between the different statements made by the Prime Minister and also between his statements and those of his colleagues. He would read one only; it was from a speech delivered to that club of eminent prigs, the Eighty Club.

> "He could not conceal his opinion that it would not be possible safely to govern this great Empire by one single Chamber without any check upon it. He did not think it would be a safe thing to trust to a vote which might pass by a small number on a great matter, because it might be liable afterwards to be reversed and might not receive the mature and complete opinion of the country."

Could any one wonder that a milk-and-water agitation, carried on in that fashion, had fallen rather flat? The Prime Minister said in one of his speeches:—"I am going to take off my coat. Take off yours." He did not take off his. He wanted to know what he was to take it off for. If he had taken it off he would have had, like the Prime Minister, to put it on again. Let the

House compare the force, energy, and grim determination with which, if the right hon. member for Midlothian had put himself at the head of a movement of the kind, he would have acted, with the way in which everything had recently been done to prevent the country rallying to the cry against the House of Lords. The Leeds resolution meant nothing more nor less than the legislative abolition of the House of Lords. If the Resolution respecting that House were on the lines of the extract he had quoted of the Earl of Kimberley, he would not vote for it. He would only vote for the Resolution if it made it clear and specific that what was contained in the Leeds Resolution was the only issue which would be put before the country. The basis of the Government Resolution was to be an appeal to the country. He did not believe the Lords would yield to a Resolution of the House of Commons. Lord Rosebery admitted that they had a perfect right to ignore any Bill abolishing them. It seemed to him that they could also ignore any Resolution. He knew what would happen if a vague Resolution were passed and it obtained a majority in the country. Officialdom would unite with Toryism; there would be a compromise; and they, poor Radicals, would be hoisted on their own petard. For his part, he would never give a blank cheque on a question of this paramount importance to any Minister, no matter what confidence he had in him; still less to a Minister in whom his confidence was somewhat qualified. Whether there should be one Chamber or two was a matter of minor detail, provided the members of either Chamber were freely elected by all in possession of the Parliamentary franchise. The Amendment of the right hon. Member for Birmingham expressed a desire for a speedy Dissolution. [*Cries of* "No."] Well, if it did not, that was an additional reason for him not to vote for it. So far as he was personally concerned he believed a speedy Dissolution would be an excellent thing for Radicals. He did not think they had lost their hold on the country. He believed that if there was a Dissolution they would come back with a far larger majority. His main reason for wishing for a speedy Dissolution was that he thought it very possible their majority would not be so great if they put off a Dissolution and continued to sit there doing nothing legislatively. The Home Secretary in his speech seemed to back out of his remark at Birmingham, that they were to pass the whole of this Session "ploughing the sands of the seashore." If a farmer were found ploughing the sands they would regard him as a lunatic who ought to be placed under restraint. In the Bible he had read of the folly of a man who built his house on the sand, but they might consult that Book or any other, and they would not find any sane human being recommended not to plough the sands of the seashore, because no one, up to the year 1895, had thought any one would ever be so silly as to do it. Much was made of the announcement by the right hon. Member for West Birmingham that he intended to vote for the Welsh Disestablishment Bill. The Chief Secretary for Ireland seemed to think that the Member for West Birmingham had the Peers in his pocket, and the mere fact of his announcing that he would vote for the Bill would lead the Peers to vote in its favour. The right hon. Gentleman, no doubt, had great influence with the Peers, but he did not seem to think they would follow his example. As to the Irish Land Bill, the Chief Secretary for Ireland said the odds against its passing would now have to be "shortened," because the Duke of Devonshire had said he would give favourable consideration to the Bill. Was the Irish Secretary so young to that House as not to be perfectly aware that when an Opposition said they would give "favourable consideration" to a Bill they merely used a Parliamentary phrase, which really meant that they would obstruct it to the best of their ability? The fact was that if the Bill was a good one it would be thrown out or emasculated; if it was a bad Bill it would be allowed to pass. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had said the other night that they ought not to refuse to carry Bills through the House of Commons from the fear that they would be thrown out by the House of Lords. That was not quite a correct exposition of the situation. The Prime Minister's words had been quoted that they could not pass Bills until the relations between the two Houses had been adjusted. Surely if the attempt were now made it would be knocking the bottom out of his own case. It was as absurd to keep sending Bills up to the other House as it would be to persist in proving the existence of a wall by knocking one's head month after month against it. The Radicals were convinced of the objectionable character of the House of Lords, and wanted no object-lessons to teach them this. The difficulty had always been to convince their leaders and bring them up to the scratch. If their leaders insisted on "filling the cup" or "ploughing the sand," they must not, hereafter, shelter themselves behind the Radicals. The Cabinet considered themselves to be tied to the Treasury bench like some victim in a Greek tragedy was tied to the rock. The Prime Minister said that they must go on because, after all, a majority was a majority. But there were, he submitted, differences in majorities. The Government might, it was true, have a majority enough to keep on, but they had not a working, militant majority. They had themselves said that their majority would never be a working majority so long as the Lords continued to possess their present powers. Yet the Government said that they ought to hold on. He contended that they had not a majority at the present time; and the only way to get a real majority was to appeal to the people. This ought to be their first business, just the same as if one wanted a cart to move along one put the horse into the shafts before the cart, and did not put the cart before the horse. If, however, Ministers thought they must plough on, then let them try to get the best possible advantage out of this somewhat singular proceeding. They had announced a Welsh Disestablishment Bill and an Irish Land Bill; also one man one vote. Let the Government take the Second Reading of the Welsh Bill and of the Irish Land Bill, and then let them refer those two Bills to large and Committees. Then let them go on with the One Man One Vote Bill, which applied to no one section in particular and would be of advantage to the whole of the country. If they were to gain by this filling of the cup system, they would, he believed, gain more by having that Bill thrown out by the House of Lords than by any other they could send up. When the Lords had thrown out that Bill, then, if the Government Resolution with regard to the other House were a drastic one, let them bring it and dissolve. It must be admitted that there was an enormous amount of Radical legislation waiting to be dealt with. They had to do away with the House of Lords, to alter the mode of election to the House of Commons, to pass a Home Rule measure for Ireland and for Wales and Scotland, too, if they could. They wanted to disestablish the Welsh Church, as they had in the past disestablished the Irish Church. They wanted also to disestablish the Scotch Church in Scotland and the English Church in England—in fact, to disestablish any church they could lay their hands on. They also had a vast mass of social legislation about which they and their constituents were most anxious. Was it not nonsense—was it business—to waste the time of the House merely in proving that the House of Lords would not accept their Bills? He would give the Home Secretary a good electioneering tip—one good Bill passed into law was of more use to the Party than showing that a dozen good Bills could not be passed. He sympathised with right hon. Gentlemen on the Front Bench, but he did not believe that anything in the world was to be gained from the electoral point of view by the Liberal Ministry remaining in Office when they were absolutely powerless to pass any Bill, whether that want of power proceeded from not having a majority in the House of Commons, or from the existence of a permanent Tory majority in the other House. If Ministers insisted on ploughing the sands, the responsibility must be their own; he accepted his fate. He would be one of the asses in the yoke to plough the sands of the seashore. (*Loud laughter and ironical Opposition cheers.*) Some hon. Gentlemen jeered. He was a good Party man—at least he was a good Party ass. But an ass had feelings; an ass reasoned, in a dumb, misty sort of way. It was well known that Balaam's ass remonstrated with his master, and the action of that ass had given him courage to venture to make the few respectful remarks which he had made. Like Balaam's ass to his master, he would urge the Government not to pursue a course which he was certain would lead to disaster. If the Government would not accept his advice, while he was ready to join with his brother asses ploughing the sands of the seashore or to do any other absurdity which his Leaders in their wisdom might require, still he could not be expected to be enthusiastic at being the yoke to do work more foolish, more unprofitable, in his humble asinine view, than any poor patient Radical or ass was ever doomed to.

MAJOR L. DARWIN (Staffordshire, Lichfield) said, that the Home Secretary had not answered the arguments of his right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham, but he charged the Unionist Party with inconsistency. He did not agree with the Home Secretary, for the Unionists had put forward their policy perfectly clearly. They protested most strongly against the use made by the Government of the time of the House. If the Government could not show that there was some chance of their Bills passing into law they must have some ulterior object in view in bringing those Bills forward. When the Prime Minister likened his Party to a huge cannon, to whom did he refer as "the enemy"? Did he mean the people of the country or the British Constitution? If the Government confined themselves to the Welsh Disestablishment and Irish Land Bills they might succeed in getting through with them, but if they added a third—the Local Veto Bill—they might find themselves in an awkward predicament. He took it that there was but an exceedingly small chance of these measures becoming law, and if that were so the Government had no justification whatever for wasting the time of the House in their discussion. The policy of filling up the cup of the House of Lords was a double-edged policy, for if the Unionists were returned to power after a General Election upon that issue it would be held by the whole country as an approval of the action of the House of Lords in throwing out the Home Rule Bill, and in that event nothing would more strengthen the House of Lords or make it more likely that they would throw out Bills in future. He thought that all men of really Liberal principles ought to pause before they gave their countenance to such a hazardous policy. He contended that the Government were not justified in bringing forward great Bills when they had a small majority which was growing less and less. It might be argued that the people were being sufficiently educated in regard to this question, but he did not think that education was yet nearly sufficient. It was perfectly easy for hon. Members to go before their constituents — packed meetings of Liberals—and when discussing the House of Lords question to use the most vague language as to their policy; but when they came to that House it was necessary that they should be more clear and explicit, and not try to hide their true policy. It appeared to him most essential that there should be, as early as possible, a Debate on this great question, in order that the most ample opportunity might be given to the country to consider the Resolution, and not a day ought to be lost in bringing it forward. Lord Rosebery had said that the Government were not educating the people in the object, but merely in the means of carrying it out. That was not Liberalism, nor was it what they ought to aim at. They did not yet know the elements of the Resolution, nor the way in which it was to be brought forward. The House of Commons was the predominant partner, it was paramount in the matter of finance and in everything else. He understood that this Resolution would propose that the House of Lords should have absolutely no power, they were to retain their coronets and everything of that sort, but as to their privileges they were to do nothing in particular. He could find no parallel to this extraordinary proposition. He thought they might assume that future Governments would ignore any such Resolution. It was time for the Government to declare their true policy, and no longer keep the country in the dark. He believed that what they were trying to do was to confuse the issues. Lord Rosebery had said that this question of the House of Lords ought to be discussed with calmness. Why then did the Government wait till close upon the General Election to bring it forward? It was perfectly certain that if it were left till then it would assume undue proportions and hide other questions. Whether the Government were making a feigned or a real attack upon the House of Lords, their object was to cover a real attack on the Union between Great Britain and Ireland, and that was neither a Liberal nor a straightforward policy. The Session upon which they were entering would, he was quite certain, augment the feeling in the country that Parliament was a place for Party tactics rather than for legislative achievements, and these were sentiments which did great harm to the House of Commons.

*MR. LEES KNOWLES (Salford, W.) said that the Government discredited themselves when, in 1893, they did not go to the country on the Home Rule Bill. Then they tried to dismember the Empire, and now they were trying to pull down the Constitution. He believed that the cry "Down with the House of Lords" was raised merely to unite the different factions which kept the Government in Office. The fact was that the Government and their supporters hoped and desired, for Party purposes, that the House of Lords would throw out their Bills, a course which could hardly be said to be consistent with sound political morality. The Government, moreover, appealed now for delay in regard to this great question. Why? Because they knew that the machinery of their government had broken down, and that if they appealed to the country they would be defeated. The hon. and learned Member for South Hackney (Mr. F. Moulton) admitted as much in an article he had recently sent to one of the magazines. This delay was wanted by the Nationalists also, for another reason—in order, as the hon. and learned Member for Louth (Mr. T. M. Healy) had stated in reference to the Disestablishment of the Welsh Church, to pay a debt of gratitude to the Welsh members for the services they rendered to Ireland in voting for the Home Rule Bill. A very strong ground for complaint against the Government was the uncertainty and indefiniteness they had shown in regard to the threatened Resolution against the House of Lords, not only as to its terms and nature, but also as to the time at which it would be brought forward and the way in which it would be carried out. Was the House of Lords to be ended, mended, or bended? Was it to have an Annual Veto or a Sessional Veto? The Government majority had already dwindled from 40 to 12, and he believed the Cabinet itself was divided on the question whether there should be one or two Chambers. Among the Liberal Party there was not unanimity of opinion. The keynote of the agitation against the House of Lords was the rejection of the Home Rule Bill in 1893, but in his opinion no Second Chamber in Europe, however constituted, would have hesitated, under the circumstances, in refusing to pass that Bill and in demanding an appeal to the people upon it. When the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that the present House of Lords was more reactionary than the House of Lords in the time of the Duke of Wellington, he seemed to forget that only last year that House passed the Parish Councils Act, and it would have passed the Employers' Liability Bill if the Government had assented to an Amendment desired by a large section of the working classes, which would have largely extended the benefits of the measure. Lord Rosebery stated at a meeting at Cardiff, as a reason for delay in bringing on the question of the House of Lords—

> "If you do not consult the susceptibilities and the attitude of the House of Lords, the Liberal Government stands in a very good chance of ending its Session as a barren Session."

Moreover, both the Prime Minister and Earl Spencer had expressed the opinion that Radical legislation under existing circumstances was impossible. Then he could not understand why the Government did not at once appeal to the country. If they believed the people were really in favour of the measures which they had promised and that the present Government would be returned with a majority, why did they not dissolve Parliament? Mr. Edward Dicey had appealed to Lord Rosebery to "drop the agitation against the House of Lords," because it "has died still-born," because "the spirits which Lord Rosebery has called from the vasty deep have declined to come," and because "the sooner this agitation is buried out of sight the better for the country, for the Liberal Party, and, above all, for its Author." But if the Government believed they would be backed up by the country, why did they not go to the country? If they were returned with a majority, the House of Lords could not, and would not, then resist those measures of the Government for which the people would have again expressed their desire. The will of the people must always prevail through their Representatives when that will was clearly expressed. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had said that the House of Lords did not show a disposition to listen to the voice of the people—to the voice of the larger mandate of the constituencies. Did the Government themselves show a disposition to listen to the voice of the constituencies? The voice of the people had recently been heard at Forfar, at Brigg, and at Evesham. He would retort on the Chancellor of the Exchequer that if the House of Lords did not listen to the voice of the people neither did the Government. Such a constitutional change as was now proposed by the Government ought not to be rushed. It had been said by Lord Rosebery and other Members of the Government that when the contemplated Resolution had been brought before the House a Dissolution must immediately follow. That being the case, the proposals of the Government ought to be made public without any delay, because the country ought to be given ample time for reflection upon so grave a subject. In the turmoil of a General Election it would be impossible for the electorate to consider a proposed great and new Constitutional change with dispassionate calmness. The question ought to be referred to the country specifically, and unobscured by any generalities. The plan of *referendum* for a case of this kind was one which would commend itself. If the Home Rule Bill had been referred specifically to the country in 1892, it could not have been said, as it was justly said, that the Government were not returned to power upon the question of Home Rule. He thought, moreover, that the House, perhaps, took a rather narrow view of the question of a change the House of Lords. The horizon of their ken was rather near, because, as a matter of fact, this constitutional question concerned not only this country, but also England beyond the seas. Surely our Colonies and possessions abroad ought to be given a chance of expressing their views upon the matter. The policy which the Government were pursuing of clinging to Office was not in the circumstances a policy which would enable them to carry out a business programme which would do good to the country. Let them appeal to the country, and if they should return with a majority let them initiate legislation for the good of the working classes in the community. The speech delivered earlier in the week by the hon. Member for the Leigh Division (Mr. Caleb Wright) had greatly surprised him. The hon. Member spoke in fluent language about the prosperity of the cotton trade in Lancashire. When he heard that speech he could not help thinking that some of his friends in Lancashire would be astonished by it. Then they knew that the hon. Member for the Ince Division (Mr. S. Woods), addressing the miners in Pendleton, had said recently—

> "they had to regret that the coal trade generally was not in as brisk a condition as it might be, and in many parts of the country trade was in as bad a condition as ever it was."

Surely trade questions were questions with which the Government might deal, with benefit. Let there be a Dissolution, and then whichever Party was returned let a business programme be initiated for the good of the kingdom generally. A programme of that kind could, he felt confident, be carried successfully both through that House and through the House of Lords.

Mr. A. THOMAS (Glamorgan, E.) said, that doubts had been expresssed whether Home Rule still occupied the first place in the Liberal programme. But after the speeches that had been delivered that night it was clear that Home Rule still held the field. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain) had said that the interest of the country in the Home Rule question was waning. He thought the right hon. Gentleman could hardly have been confirmed in that opinion when he visited Cardiff some time ago. That the interest in the question was not waning in Wales was shown at the last election in Cardiganshire, when a Unionist candidate, who supported the policy of Disestablishment, was defeated by some 1,900 votes. Welsh Members had waited too long for Disestablishment to be willing to give it up now that it was within their grasp. A few years ago the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham advised the Welsh Members to vote against the Government in order to force them to bring the question on. The right hon. Gentleman might have changed his mind on this question, but Welshmen had not changed theirs, and he was glad to know that it was to be brought forward again by the Government. Their allies, the Irish Members, now knew that the great question of Home Rule was still to the front. There was no reason, therefore, why they should desert the great Party which had done so much for them already and which Welshmen hoped would do so much for them also.

*MR. B. L. COHEN (Islington, E.), said that he was really entirely at a loss to know on what grounds Her Majesty's Government had arrayed all their forces and exercised all their influence against the Amendment which was now before the House. It did not seem to him that in the powerful speech which was delivered by the Home Secretary, the right hon. Gentleman gave any reason whatever against the arguments of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham, who moved the Amendment; and, indeed, in one or two passages, he gave, to his mind, very convincing reasons why that Amendment deserved the support not only of the House, but of Her Majesty's Ministers. It could not be disputed, one would imagine, that, in the words of the Amendment, it was contrary to the public interest that a postponement should take place of the appeal to the country which the Government had themselves admitted to be indispensable. The Home Secretary said it surely could not be urged against them that they were not doing all in their power to hasten the passage of measures which they believed to be useful and conducive to the welfare of the country. It seemed, however, to him that that was just what the Government were not doing. The hon. Member for Northampton told them that he was a loyal Member of his Party, and by way of testifying his loyalty he said: "We intend that the will of the people shall be dominant." It seemed to him that was exactly what they on the Unionist side were contending for, and what the Government had resisted. It was the will of the people which they wanted to be dominant. They wanted to consult the will of the people, which they believed to be on their side; whilst their opponents believed it to be on theirs, and this was an issue which could only be solved by an appeal to the country, which their opponents seemed to shirk. He said it was not only this necessity for an appeal to the country which had been acknowledged by the Government, but they had even told them the time it was to be made. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, speaking on the 12th of March of last year, the opening day of the Session, said—

> "You ask us when we are going to appeal to the country. I will tell you. When we have placed before the country the whole plan and scheme of the Liberal Party, when we have placed the country in a position to judge what has been the course of either Party in the House of Commons with reference to this plan, and what has been the conduct of the House of Lords with regard to it. That is the time when we mean to go to the country, and that is the issue we intend to put before it."

He (Mr. Cohen) said that that time had passed, and as to the issue the Unionists asked for nothing better. He saw two distinguished Members of the Government opposite to him, and they would not dispute that they had done their best during the Recess, and had been supported by many of their eminent colleagues, to expose and pillory before the country the conduct of the Unionist Party in the House of Commons. They had also arraigned before the country the conduct of the House of Lords. The conditions, therefore, which the Chancellor of the Exchequer told them must be fulfilled before the time came for an appeal to the country, had passed, the issues should be joined, and the Unionists were ready to challenge the verdict. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had said the whole plan or scheme of the Government had not yet been laid before the country. The country already knew sufficient of that plan to enable it to form an opinion in regard to it. Some constituencies had given their verdict. Brigg, Forfar, Evesham and South Paddington, the latter by default, had given judgment. Other constituencies were waiting patiently for the opportunity of expressing their view. The Government had failed to pass their Home Rule Bill, and they doubted whether they could pass their Welsh Disestablishment Bill, and their Local Veto Bill. Did Her Majesty's Ministers expect to find salvation by means of their Factory Law Amendment Bill, or their Light Railways Bill, which, by the way, was to throw the burden on the rates.

Mr. H. H. FOWLER: Nobody has said so.

*Mr. COHEN said, he had not seen the Bill, and of course accepted the correction of right hon. Gentleman. But it surely had not escaped the memory of the right hon. Gentleman that the President of the Board of Trade had said he was of opinion that Light Railways could not be charged on the Imperial Exchequer. Was it then because the charge was not to be placed on local rates, that the Government looked to the Light Railways Bill to obtain for them the salvation which he thought they must have seen was not to be obtained by an appeal to the country, simply on Home Rule, or Welsh disestablishment? He must not call the policy of Her Majesty's Government cowardly, but he asserted it was certainly not bold and straightforward; if Ministers sincerely believed in the value of the measures which they had submitted, and intended to submit to Parliament, but thought they could not pass them, why did they not adopt the only means of securing their enactment, namely, an appeal to the country, and the overthrow of the obstructive Unionist Party? Because forsooth the whole programme of the Liberal party was not before the country. He believed the more the country saw of the Liberal programme the less it would like it. The nervousness of the Government was really very touching. The unwillingness to show any confidence in their own measures was scarcely worthy of Ministers. He believed it had retarded useful measures for which the country was waiting, measures which were far more conducive to the health and happiness of the people than schemes for the destruction of the Church or the disintegration of the Empire. A policy of introducing Bills which the Government knew well would not pass, brought discredit upon the House of Commons, and to mark his disapproval of such vacillating and cowardly action on the part of Her Majesty's Government, he should, without any hesitation, go into the lobby with the right hon. Gentleman, the Member for West Birmingham.

*Sir MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright) wished the House could divest itself for a moment of purely party politics, and pay some heed to the view generally taken in the country in regard to what was going on within these walls. There never was a time, he thought, when the depression of agricultural and industrial pursuits was so keenly felt by all classes of the community, and for Members of the House of Commons to spend their time in party recriminations was not much consolation to a starving man. The points which had been raised to-night, opened up a very wide field, and he was surprised at the comparative emptiness of the House at this stage of the proceedings. It was, of course, known that the Debate could not conclude to-night, and it was also apparently believed that the Government would have a sufficient following to give them a majority. That, however, was no reason why they should not gauge the particular points in dispute, and ask themselves whether or not the Government were really doing their duty to the country, and were addressing themselves to the consideration of those matters in respect to which legislation was required. They knew that in order to satisfy particular sections and factions of their party, Her Majesty's Ministers were obliged to enter upon large constitutional questions, the discussion of any one of which would absorb the greater part of the time of a Session, and leave matters of far greater moment to the working classes untouched. His experience in Scotland convinced him that a great change had taken place in the view the constituencies took of the Government. It was true a very large majority of the Scottish Members sat upon the Liberal Benches, but it was extremely doubtful whether the same number of Liberal representatives would be returned at the next Election, while it was certain those who were returned would not have the same following. In fact all the signs of the time showed that notwithstanding the able speeches which had been made in Scotland by the Home Secretary, Secretary for War, and the Secretary for Scotland, the Government were rapidly losing ground in that country. This striking change of opinion was mainly due to the fact that the people wanted something done by Parliament which would improve their social and industrial condition. It was on the absence of measures of that kind from the legislative programme of the Session that the Unionist party really found fault with the Government; of course they admitted that the Government was under very great pressure; that they had given pledges and promises here, and pledges and promises there; that those pledges and promises which they had so lavishly strewn about on all sides in 1892 had now come home to roost, and that it was difficult for the Government to evade them and seek to give their attention to measures which would be highly useful to the country. As to the Government's quarrel with the House of Lords, the whole country was ringing with applause of the action of the Lords in rejecting the Home Rule Bill. In fact, there were very few Liberal Members who would defend the Bill in its entirety. They might all say they would vote for Home Rule, but there were a great many of them who would not vote again for the Bill which was carried in 1893. It should not be forgotten how that Bill was pushed through the House of Commons. Could the Government have imagined for one moment that the Lords would have accepted the Bill after it had been pushed through the House of Commons at a high pressure speed, with the aid of the guillotine, which deprived the House of the opportunity of discussing a great many of its clauses? Why the hon. Member for the Central Division of Edinburgh (Mr. W. M'Ewen) said in a speech that when the fifth Clause of the Bill was reached, there was not a man on the Liberal side of the House who did not know that the Bill was doomed. [Sir D. MACFARLANE—I knew it before the Bill was brought in.] Then the hon. Gentleman was wiser than most of the Members. If the Bill had been drawn on lines giving extensive local self-government to Ireland the hon. Gentleman might feel perfectly satisfied that it would have passed through the other House, and possibly the Lords, by amending it, would have made it a far better measure than when it passed the Commons. But let the Government bring forward their Resolutions against the House of Lords. What was the use of vapouring about the Lords? let the Government formulate their charge against the Lords! The Country was satisfied with the action of the Lords in rejecting the Home Rule Bill; it seemed to be satisfied with the insertion of the Contracting Out Clause into the Employers' Liability Bill by the Lords, and it was in perfect agreement with them in rejecting the Evicted Tenants' Bill. What the House of Lords did in all those matters was in accordance with ancient usage, and in the exercise of its proper functions. It was said that the House of Commons should be supreme, but it was the people that were supreme; it was for the people to decide who were right and who were wrong, and on that ground the Unionist Party asked that the appeal should be at once made to the Electorate. It was acknowledged by the Government that very little work could be done this Session. The Government might bring in Bills; but on their own showing, those Bills were already condemned. That was the statement of the Prime Minister and several other Ministers. What then was the use of going on? The country wanted some work done, and he for his part was eager to assist in passing social measures which would be productive of good, and really beneficial to the people; but he supposed the Government would try to go on with their Welsh Disestablishment scheme. That was a most uninteresting measure to scratch Members, though probably some of them looked upon it with favour, because they thought it would be followed by the Disestablishment of the Scotch Church. But it would be found that the Government had made a very false move, when they tried to stir up an agitation for Disestablishment in Scotland. The Attorney General had admitted so much, in a speech to his constituents. In fact that agitation was the chief cause of the weakening of the influence of Government in the southern part of Scotland, and the longer the question was before the people, and the more they understood it, the stronger would grow their determination not to part with what was the property of their thoroughly popular and democratic Church. It had been his lot to speak at many meetings in Scotland during the Recess, and the experience convinced him that the tone and feeling of the electorate had undergone a remarkable change. If the Government gave their attention to domestic matters—to matters affecting the poor law, old age pensions, and other questions affecting for good, not only the working classes, but all classes of the community, they would really be doing something to redeem the vast amount of time they had lost in bringing in the Home Rule Bill and other vexatious measures. But the Government would not give their attention to those matters. They were about to bring in a Local Veto Bill. A great many people were anxious that such a Bill should pass, but it was idle for the Government to expect —in face of the vast amount of opposition that would be brought to bear against it — to pass this Session any Bill like the Bill laid before the House last year. There was another Government measure, the Registration Bill, which proposed the disfranchising of about 700,000 out voters. Liberal Governments in the past were always engaged in enfranchising, but the present Government deliberately proposed to disfranchise many hundreds of thousands of voters, who had a perfect right to vote in two places, as well as in one, in which they had property and other interests at stake. Last year a Scotch Parish Councils Bill was passed. He had done all he could to secure a good reception for the Bill, and to make it prove useful. But it was received with the smallest satisfaction, so far as he knew, in Scotland. The people feared that it would lead to heavy increase in the rates. He hoped they would be wrong; but certainly the rates would not be lightened. If the Government instead of embarking on rash constitutional measures, would introduce a social programme in which all parties could join, the Session might no longer be sterile, but might be one full of useful legislation. But if the Government decline to adopt that course they might anticipate a relentless opposition to these objectionable measures which they were apparently determined to bring forward.

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said, the confusion which had been noted in the policy of the Government seemed to him to be only the outcome of the situation which had been disclosed on the authority of Ministers themselves. It was apparent that there was a dispute for the primacy, not of men, but of measures. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said it was to rest with Home Rule, but Lord Rosebery gave it to the House of Lords, for he had told them that the next election would turn not upon Home Rule but upon the House of Lords. The point of the Amendment was, that it was directed against the waste of time by Ministers in introducing measures which they themselves admitted would not pass into law. They were told it was no longer 100 to one against the Land Bill passing this Session. That, however, was because the Home Secretary had hedged—had covered one imprudent bet by making another in the opposite way. And the hedging bet had been made in consequence of information from the opposing stable—in consequence of something said by the right hon. Member for West Birmingham and the Duke of Devonshire. They had come to this—that the Ministry acknowledged themselves of *malice prepense* to have had the intention of bringing in a measure against the passing of which they were ready to lay 100 to one; they had walked with their eyes open into a bog, in the anticipation that they would be pulled out by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham and the Duke of Devonshire. There had been no explanation of the "ploughing of the sands," and although he was informed that the hon. Member for Northampton had likened his Party to a yoke of jackasses, he did not believe that the assistance all the four legged animals in the world could give to the Government, in the prosecution of this strange kind of agriculture, would ever enable them to reap a crop. The Home Secretary did indeed make one statement that bore the semblance of an argument when he said that the mere introduction of Bills, their elaboration, and their discussion would lead to some good results with regard to these Bills. If that was true, and if, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer said, the primary object of the Government was to advance Home Rule, surely the first measure they would introduce would not be Welsh Disestablishment or Local Veto, but Home Rule itself, their primary measure of legislation, in order to subject it to this excellent and healthful process of elaboration, discussion, preparation, and mastication for future digestion, which the Home Secretary shadowed forth. Or why should they not apply the process to the famous Resolution? Did it not require elaboration? If the Government would furnish him with a satisfactory reason why they did not submit the Home Rule Bill and the Resolution to this process, he would go very near to voting against the Amendment. They were told that the hurricame of Home Rule and the earthquake of the House of Lords were to be produced to an astonished world at the proper moment, but meantime they were to be amused with the damp squibs of Welsh Disestablishment and Local Veto. That was mere trifling with the House of Commons and with the country. Lord Rosebery said, some five years ago, to a Liberal Conference in Scotland—where a programme of subjects for legislation was spread out just as done in the present Queen's Speech—that that programme was a foolish one, because it omitted the one question which must take precedence of the realisation of all their projects, and that was the drastic dealing with the House of Lords. That was as true to-day, and no doubt the Prime Minister told his colleagues that their programme was a foolish one, because it omitted the one question which must take precedence. But that was exactly what the Amendment said. The whole point of the constitutional changes alluded to in the Amendment lay in the assertion of the Government that the present relations between the House of Commons and the House of Lords constituted a serious obstacle to legislation according to the will of the people. If they were convinced of the existence of this obstacle, if they were convinced that it was such an obstacle as prevented the will of the English people from being carried into effect, why did they not take steps to remove it? Why run their heads against it without taking any steps whatever to deal with it, or to suggest any means by which they proposed to deal with it? The Government, however, insisted on the foolish programme of a number of projects, without that which came before their realisation. It was not a reasonable view, and it was not Lord Rosebery's view of the way in which the House should be treated in this Session, and in this Queen's Speech. Lord Rosebery told his hearers at Cardiff that—

> "We must bear in mind that our process of winnowing has to go on, when only a very few measures of the first class can be hoped to be passed through the House of Commons. . . . We are anxious that the Programme of Business for 1895 shall be a distinctly business programme."

Hon. Members opposite were anxious that it should be a distinctly "sandy" programme—

> "We are anxious, therefore, to announce in the Queen's Speech next Session only those measures which we see a reasonable prospect of passing . . . . It is proper, therefore, in the Queen's Speech to limit the measures to those which are quite practicable, and to lay before Parliament measures which we hope, if we have life and health, to carry through. The Government are pledged to such a policy."

How had this declaration been carried out? The Queen's Speech placed before Parliament eight measures as to which it was admitted that there was no pros- of carrying them into law. In the short space of a few weeks, an entire departure had been made from the policy to which the Prime Minister told the people of Cardiff the Government were pledged. Instead of restricting the Queen's Speech to those measures which they could pass, they had filled it with measures which they could not possibly pass. What was the obstacle? It was not the existence of the House of Lords, for Lord Rosebery had said, again and again, that he would not think of attacking the House of Lords, in its existence. It was not, either, the constitution of the House of Lords; what then was it? It was the fact that there were too many Tories in the House of Lords. But there were too many Radicals in the House of Commons. There were 40 too many two years ago, and only the other day these proved to be 12 too many; probably next week they would be found 8 or 10 too many. If, to the right-minded Radical, the fact that there were too many Tories in the House of Lords was an argument against that House, then, to the right-minded Tory, the fact that there were too many Radicals in the House of Commons was an equally good argument against the Lower Chamber. What was the meaning of this argument? Was it a complaint that there were too many Tories in the House of Lords, or was it a complaint that the majority of the House of Lords was out of harmony with the House of Commons? He imagined that the second was what would be called the real ground of complaint. If it was the first, it amounted to nothing more than the whine of a faction; and, as to the second, if the argument was that the majority of the House of Lords should be in harmony with the House of Commons, then, whenever there was a change in the House of Commons you would have to re-constitute the House of Lords. In this House, at this moment, the majority was Radical, and it was complained that the majority of the House of Lords was Tory. But at some time or other, however, they might prevail upon, or drive right hon. Gentlemen opposite to dissolve, and have a General Election; and the result of that might conceivably be a Tory majority in the House of Commons. Mark the result. Suppose in the meantime, a Resolution had been passed, and the relations altered, so as to give in the House of Lords a Radical majority, in consonance with the present majority of the House of Commons; after the Dissolution it would be necessary to call for a reconstitution of the House of Lords again; and he did not know when or where the process was to end. The Prime Minister had said, again and again, that he did not wish to end or to mend the House of Lords; he was quite ready to play the game, as it had always been played, only he must load the dice. The Prime Minister was so simple. Lord Rosebery said that—

> "The salient fact of the situation is that you can only deal with the House of Lords by Bill, or by Revolution; there is no third way at all."

Mr. T. Gibson Bowles.

But, immediately, he proceeded to find a third way, and that was by a Resolution—Revolution, in other words, spelt with an "s." The Prime Minister considered this Resolution, and he asked his hearers whether this Resolution would be enough. "I frankly tell you," he declared, "that it would not be enough; we must have a mandate from the people." Therefore, the third way, which did not exist, having been found in a Resolution, was followed by the discovery that the Resolution itself would not be enough, and that what would be required would be a mandate from the people. Had a Prime Minister ever before been convicted of a concatenation of nonsense like this? It was perfectly surprising; and he could not understand any reasonable being listening to such a farrago, as it appeared when he placed these declarations in their proper order. They had been put before the people of the country in a false order, and he had now ventured to put them in what he considered to be their logical sequence. It was clear that all this was absolutely and entirely unreal. It was manifest that whatever the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Home Secretary might mean, the Prime Minister, at least, did not mean to enter upon a struggle with the House of Lords. It might be said of him, as it was said of the man who struggled with the Laws of England—

> "No man ever yet wrestled with the Laws of England, but in the end they broke his neck."

That, he thought, would be the fate of any man who struggled with the House of Lords. But if any man wished for a struggle with the House of Lords, there was no difficulty about undertaking it. There were precedents in the journals of the House for struggles with the House of Lords. There was the famous Resolution of 1649, which declared—

> "That the Commons of England in Parliament assembled do declare . . . . that whatever is enacted, or declared for Law, by the Commons in Parliament assembled, hath the force of Law; and all the people of this nation are concluded thereby, although the consent and concurrence of King or House of Peers be not had thereunto."

Was that the character of the resolution which was going to be submitted? No; it was too like the Leeds resolution and this, the House was now distinctly told they were not to have. The whole history of these incidents shewed the unreality of this pretended campaign against the House of Lords, and that the Prime Minister had been forced into it against his will. The day after the Prime Minister first raised the standard against the House of Lords, the *Daily Chronicle* contained this sentence—

> "It is not too much to say that if Lord Rosebery had disappointed the expectations of the great bulk of his following, the Liberal Government would have been out of office in three months, and for a time at least the Liberal Party would have been dissolved."

Lord Rosebery was informed that he must make his declaration; judicious pressure was put upon him, and, as usual, he yielded to it. It must be manifest now to the Prime Minister that there was no reality in the agitation against the House of Lords. He did not believe there was any reality in the minds of any Gentleman on the Treasury Bench with regard to this earthquake which was to uproot the House of Lords. He did not think it was right or respectful to that House that the Government should come down and propose measures which they declared they had no chance of passing. This Amendment put the finger on the weak point; what the Government contemplated was not a policy, or legislation, but the waste of time of the House in order that they might a little longer, for a few months or a few weeks, sit discredited and disgraced on the Benches opposite.

*MR. R. J. D. BURNIE (Swansea Town) said, the right hon. Gentleman, in moving the Amendment, referred to the opinion of Wales, but he did not understand the Welsh people, and although he had tried on several occasions to lead them astray he had failed. On one occasion, in the early days of the Home Rule controversy, in a well-remembered letter to the "Baner" newspaper, he had raised the cry of "No Popery," but to their credit the Welsh Nonconformists would have nothing to do with his policy. Later on, he went to Cardiganshire, and there, addressing his new Welsh friends a few hundreds of times, he tried to persuade the Welsh people that the way to get Disestablishment was for them to throw over Home Rule. Again they spurned his advice. So long as the right hon. Gentleman continued his present policy he never would again command the affection or respect of the Welsh people. The people of Wales were too sound in their political convictions to be easily led astray. As to the Welsh people and the Irish people, the former felt that the latter had pointed the way. Ireland had had its Tithes question and settled it. Wales had yet to settle its Tithe question. Ireland had had its Church question and settled it a quarter of a century ago. Wales had its Church question, and it was about, as he hoped, to settle it. Then again the Irish land question was on all fours with the land question in Wales, and therefore Wales was in hearty sympathy with Ireland. When they came to the last great measure, self-government for Ireland, there again the Welsh aspirations were with the Irish people. The Irish people had pointed the way to Wales, Wales had grasped hands with Ireland, and it would be hopeless for almost any man to go back and get re-elected for a Welsh constituency, though he might be in favour of the Welsh programme, if he opposed Home Rule for Ireland. He should have thought that the Conservative Party would have hesitated to bring in this Amendment, seeing that their forces when combined with those of the Member for Waterford and all other discontents had been defeated by majorities of 12 and 20. He ventured to think that in this Division they would have a substantial majority. It was his privilege to address many meetings, and there was no question that caused so much enthusiasm as when it was stated that Home Rule continued to be the primary aim of the Liberal Party. That Party had put its hand to Home Rule and it would not look back. Mr. Bright said that Ireland was the land of many wrongs and of many sorrows, a land whose past history had been almost all in shadow; and he believed the English, the Welsh, and the Scotch people realised that, and that they were determined, in future, Ireland should have a better prospect, and were satisfied that could only be brought about permanently by a broad and generous measure of Home Rule. It was said that the Government at this juncture should appeal to the country merely because the House of Lords refused to pass measures submitted to it. It appeared to him a greater mistake could not be made. The Government would not discharge its duty unless it continued to deal with every point in the Newcastle programme until it was stopped by an adverse vote of that House. When that took place it would be time enough to go to the country. They had hitherto endeavoured to carry out the people's mandate, given at the General Election, but an unrepresentative Chamber blocked the way. When an appeal to the country became necessary, the question would be whether the House of Lords were to rule or the House of Commons. He was confident that when the proper moment arrived the Government would do their duty, and, whether they moved by Resolution or by Bill, the whole of the Liberal Party would help them to remove out of the way that unrepresentative continuous stumbling-block to Liberal and Radical progress.

MR. ELLIOTT LEES (Birkenhead) said, he understod that they were face to face with the greatest Revolution since the time of James the Second. Certainly nothing in the appearance of the House suggested that they were face to face with a great Revolution. He saw no sign of it on the Benches opposite. The Government had produced a Queen's Speech in which no reference was made to these revolutionary proposals, and it seemed to him that the Government must be very vague in their minds as to what was a revolution and what was not. In the time of James the Second men played for high stakes. If they were unsuccessful they lost their heads. What was the origin of the whole of this attack on the House of Lords? The House of Lords rejected the Home Rule Bill, and the late Prime Minister bequeathed to his followers vengeance against the House of Lords, a bequest which they did not seem over anxious at first to take up. Perhaps the Succession Duty was too high. At any rate, things did not go very well with the Liberal Party. They could not find a cry, and the greatest calamity that befell them was their defeat for the St. Leger. Many people liked to imagine what would have happened if Blucher had not arrived in time at Waterloo; if Hannibal had marched on Rome. He left to those speculative gentlemen the discussion of what would have happened if Ladas had won the St. Leger, if the Prime Minister—having won the Derby and St. Leger—had been able to go to the country on his horse and not on the destruction of the House of Lords. Some hon. Members opposite were in favour of a Second Chamber, others were not; but all seemed to be agreed on one point, and one point alone, and that was that they would like to abolish the hereditary peerage. He wanted to know what Bill of late years had been destroyed by the hereditary principle. The Home Secretary said they were determined not to have Legislation thwarted any longer by irresponsible and hereditary legislators. Would any Gentleman tell him of any first-class Bill of recent years that had been thwarted by the hereditary legislators? Did hon. Gentlemen really imagine that the Home Rule Bill was? He did not know whether this point had been brought before the House before, but, if it had not, it was well worth the while of the House to attend to it. It was this, that the Home Rule Bill would have been defeated without the intervention of hereditary legislators at all. He did not know whether hon. Gentlemen who were in favour of a Second Chamber preferred the principle of a higher Electorate, or that of a Committee of men with seats for life. If the latter, they would have much the same sort of Chamber they had to-day. First holders of peerages were selected, because in the opinion of the Cabinet of the day they were worthy of a seat in the Second Chamber. He had taken the trouble to analyse the Division List in the House of Lords upon the Home Rule Bill. Of course everyone knew that the figures were 419 against and only 41 in favour of it. If he could show that more than 41 first holders of peerages voted against the Bill, what became of the assertion that it was defeated by the hereditary principle? In addition to the bishops there were 51 Peers, themselves the first holders of their titles, created by the Cabinet of the day because they were thought worthy of a seat in the Second Chamber, who voted against the Home Rule Bill. It was true that 17 non-hereditary Peers voted in favour of the Bill, but these figures showed that out of a Second Chamber composed of men specially chosen by the Cabinet of the day, there was a majority of 51 to 17 against the Bill. Could any man in favour of a Second Chamber contend that the House of Lords, in throwing out the Home Rule Bill by a majority of 51 first holders of peerages to 17, deserved to be attacked on the ground of the hereditary principle. It was interesting to go a little further. He took out these figures upon the Home Rule Bill first of all; but the country did not care a little bit about the Home Rule Bill. He went through an election lately, and one of the questions his opponents asked was —"What has this election to do with Home Rule?" There was a Bill about which a great deal of froth and clap-trap had been talked, and on which hon. Members on the other side of the House had hoped to win the favour of the Electorate, the Employers' Liability Bill. "It was a monstrous thing," it was said, "that these men, sitting in their gilded chamber, should be allowed, simply because they are their fathers' sons, to vote down the clause which proposed to do away with freedom of contract." Lord Ripon's Motion to agree with the Commons on the Employers' Liability Bill was rejected by a majority of non-hereditary Peers. The numbers on the Division were—Contents, 23; Not Contents, 137. Among the Contents, those who were in favour of doing away with the freedom of the British working man, there were five holders of first peerages; and among the Not Contents there were 24. So, it appeared, after all, it was not the effete scions of an hereditary aristocracy who championed the freedom of the British working man in the House of Lords. No; the majority had been Members of the House of Commons, or were Judges, or great Lawyers, or had served their country abroad, or had achieved other distinctions for which they had been thought worthy, by a Cabinet of the day, to sit in the House of Lords. He did not know that this Debate had been altogether worthy of the occasion. We were approaching a grave constitutional crisis, and hon. Members opposite had not shown any appreciation of the gravity of the situation. After all, the speech of the Home Secretary was only a brilliant reply, and there had been no speech giving reasons why a great constitutional change should be attempted. The liberties of the people of England had been won; there was no political inequality; but there was great social inequality; and the people wanted social reforms. They did not want the Constitution to be upset simply because a Party needed an electioneering cry. Let the House try to give the people the social reforms for which they were pining. If hon. Members, thinking of the days of the first Reform Bill and the Corn Laws, imagined they had only to make their cry big enough to raise the country, they would find they were much mistaken. The people knew something of politics now. They did not want more freedom, but they did demand happiness. Let Parliament make them happier in their daily lives. What they demanded they would know how to obtain at the General Election.

Sir R. E. WEBSTER (Isle of Wight): I paused in rising in the expectation that we might have a speech, not necessarily from a Cabinet Minister, but, at all events, from the other side of the House, in support of that position taken up by Her Majesty's Government which we are attacking by this Amendment. The position is, that the Government, notwithstanding that the course of their policy has been settled for several months, notwithstanding that it has been their settled determination to make an attack upon the Constitution of the country, and to bring about what the Prime Minister described as a revolution, Her Majesty's Government have elected to announce the introduction of measures which, it has been said without contradiction, there is practically no hope of passing into Law, while they decline to give us the slightest intimation as to the form and time of the attack upon the House of Lords. We have heard to-night three speeches from the other side. We have heard a most able speech from the Home Secretary, of whom I may be allowed to say that it is a satisfaction to us, his old comrades at the Bar, and some of us who may be called his old leaders, to see how fully he has justified the selection made of him to fill the high office he now holds. I can assure him that, however much we may differ upon matters of policy, we have but one feeling, so far as he is personally concerned, and that is one of gratification at the place he now fills in the House of Commons and the country. But the more we recognise the ability of the right hon. Gentleman, the more we, who have had experience of him, know of his powers as an advocate, so much the more are we astonished at the defence he was able to make to-night of the position of the Government. It is too much to say that there was absolutely no reply to the substantial attack made by the right hon. Member for West Birmingham. Personal allusions abounded in the speech. It seemed to be deemed sufficient to quote some speech made ten years ago for the purpose of holding up, for the moment, the right hon. Member for West Birmingham to the amusement of this House. Surely that is not practical or Ministerial politics. It is not sufficient for the Government of the day simply to quote the speeches of a political opponent without dealing with the substantial matter brought forward. I propose, with the permission of the House, to direct my attention to the few passages in the speech of the Home Secretary which may be called arguments. I think it is a compliment to speak of them as substantial arguments against the merits of the Resolution. He first of all reminded us that this was the third motion of want of confidence in the Government which we had supported. I waited, and those around me waited, to see whether he would point to the slightest inconsistency between our present position and our position on former occasions. We stated—and supported the view by arguments which met, at any rate, with considerable approval from many members opposite—that the condition of agriculture and trade and labour was such as required the urgent attention of the Government, and we urged that these were matters of graver importance than the heroic measures mentioned in the Queen's Speech. What inconsistency is there in supporting a motion in accord with what we have maintained for months—that the Government dare not face an appeal to the country. The Home Secretary spoke in a sneering tone of what he was pleased to call our "new comrades," suggesting that there was something unworthy on our part, because we were willing to join with others who, from their point of view, protested against the inconsistency of the action of the Government with regard to the proposal of Home Rule. It seems to me to ill befit a comrade of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to sneer at us because we voted with men with whom for the time being we were in accord. The Home Secretary seems to say :—

> "You do not understand our position at all. We cannot pass our measures into law because we cannot get them supported by the House of Lords; but that would be no excuse, as far as we are concerned, for not introducing them into the House of Commons."

But what has been the meaning of the almost plaintive appeals that the Prime Minister has made to his small and dwindling majority? I do not want to quote the passages from the Prime Minister's speeches which have already been referred to to-night, but the complaint of Lord Rosebery has been that the difficulties of the Government were not only because of the House of Lords, but because the Government could not rely on the majority behind them in this House as having sufficient force to enable them to press their measures. Will the Home Secretary think of the references made by Lord Rosebery to the fact that even under favourable circumstances you can only hope to pass one or two measures through the House of Commons, no suggestion being made that there was any possibility of passing these measures through the House of Lords, if there had been behind them, in the House of Commons, a substantial majority? But there is another passage in the Home Secretary's speech which I confess I heard with regret. He suggested that the duty of the Government was to introduce Bills into this House without reference to whether they could pass them into law. I, having had many years' experience of this House, protest against the House of Commons being degraded to that position. I deny that any Ministry in times gone by has considered the House of Commons to be even a first-rate debating society, or that it was the function of Ministers to retain their positions when they cannot carry their legislation to a successful issue. What was the principle by which past Governments have been actuated? If they could not command a sufficient majority to carry the measures of which they approved, or to force them through the House of Lords, they have appealed to the country to get fresh strength behind them. The Home Secretary is no doubt a much better historian than I am, but from my study of politics during the present reign it seems impossible to find a case of a Ministry—except possibly one, to which reference has been made—which has retained Office when its Bills were being rejected by the House of Lords. That is not the only degrading aspect of this question. The Government have further degraded their Party into a number of constituent elements, which are employed in log-rolling one another's Bills through the House. No secret has been made about it. The Member for North Louth made no secret of it the other night; and the real and only strength of the Government at the present time lies in this fact. It is my opinion that, in regard to a large number of the measures of Her Majesty's Government, if the voting took place by ballot there would not be the slightest chance of passing them through the House of Commons. There are five or six measures of first-class importance in the Queen's Speech, and the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary have said that, with a good majority at their backs, they could not hope to get more than one, or possibly two, of those measures through the House of Commons. Can it be pretended that the House is united in regard to the Local Option Bill? I doubt whether the Government really have any intention to press that Bill through. On the question of Disestablishment my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary evinced great surprise at what he termed an expression of convulsive emotion on the part of my right hon. Friend, the Member for St. George's, and the Home Secretary referred to that expression with surprise as coming from the author of the Irish Church Bill. My right hon. Friend, the Home Secretary, seemed to think that no author of the Irish Church Bill would be found opposing his Bill for Welsh Disestablishment. Is my right hon. Friend's memory so short? Who was the principal author of the Bill for disestablishing the Irish Church? It is to the right hon. Gentleman, the Member for Midlothian that we must go to find the strongest arguments against disestablishing the Welsh Church. If my right hon. Friend ever took the trouble to study the Debate on the Irish Church Bill he would find that speaker after speaker stated that there was no parallel to be drawn between the Irish Church Bill and Welsh Disestablishment. I want no stronger arguments against my right hon. Friend's Welsh Bill than those which were used upon the Irish Bill in the House and throughout the country. Both I and my right hon. Friend desire to avoid cant as much as possible, and I therefore regretted to hear him speak of his Bill as one for securing religious equality among the Welsh people. Let him test that by dividing his Bill into two parts, and let him say, for the present, that he does not care about Disendowment, and does not intend to proceed with this part of it. Does he think he would then obtain the hearty support of the Welsh Members? We are in favour of Establishment on account of the State. We are against Disendowment, because we believe that funds appropriated to religion are going to be taken away for other purposes. We say that it is degrading the House of Commons to discuss measures which could never be carried into law. I endeavoured to note the arguments of my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, but it struck me at the time that, able and brilliant as that speech was as a contribution to this Debate, yet, as an answer to the main case made by my right hon. Friend, the Member for West

Birmingham, there was scarcely a mark which bore on the real subject before the House. One point I desire to press upon the House. It is this: in the beginning of 1894 the Government had practically determined upon this attack upon the House of Lords. Through 1894 they were endeavouring to see whether or not it would "catch on" with the country; and, down to a time which I will point out distinctly, the Prime Minister and his colleagues were all stating to the country that they believed it was going to be a successful cry. But when the elections went against them they abandoned it, and to this day we do not know whether a Resolution against the House of Lords is really going to be brought forward, when it is to be introduced, or even the general outline of the Resolution. Trace for a moment this agitation. On March 1, 1894, the right hon. Gentleman, the Member for Midlothian, delivered his last speech in the House of Commons. He spoke with his old fire, and seemed to us to carry with him his supporters, who cheered him as enthusiastically as ever. And what was the legacy he left to his Party? In the last speech which he made in the House he said:—

> "We have reached such a development as to create a state of things which we are compelled to say that, in our judgment, it cannot continue. The position of the House of Lords is so profoundly acute that it demands a settlement, and must receive a settlement at an early date."

What was the next step? I confess Mr. Speaker, that I regret the speech of the hon. Member for Northampton, which did not seem to me to be worthy of a Member of this House; and I regret very much, quite apart from its tone, that a Member of this House should feel justified in confessing that, although every argument in his speech is against his Party, yet he is going to support them. But the hon. Member for Northampton has had more to do with this matter than might be supposed from his speech. On March 13th, of last year, the hon. Member moved an Amendment, and the memory of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was singularly short-lived when he said the night before last that a defeat on the Address was equivalent to the defeat of the Ministry, for upon that Amendment his Government were defeated. Of course, the right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues were not obliged to take the hon. Member for Northampton seriously, but that view of their action is impossible, owing to the course of events. The matter was, no doubt, discussed in Cabinet; unquestionably it was discussed among the wire-pullers of the Gladstonian Party, and, in consequence, on May 15, there was issued from the National Liberal Federation in Parliament Street, a formal notice addressed to the Liberal Associations in this country, calling upon them to give a definite and concrete expression of the feelings of the Liberal Party upon the question of the House of Lords. Nobody will deny that that circular was sent out in order to feel the pulse of the Liberal Party upon this question. That circular was dated May 15, and on May 25, the Prime Minister, speaking at Birmingham, said that the task of depriving the House of Lords of the power of thwarting the will of the House of Commons was one of immense difficulty, and that he, as a Member of the Government, asked for the support, the direction, and the enthusiasm of the nation. That was a perfectly clear indication. On June 20, the Leeds Conference was held, and I never have been able to understand what it is that should make Her Majesty's Government attempt to throw overboard the resolutions of that Conference, fitting in, as they did, with the earlier speeches of the Prime Minister, except that they know now that the feeling of the country is entirely against them. But, Sir, I am not going to allow the Leeds Conference to be dismissed in this summary manner. Who were there? Members who cannot be called merely the rank and file of the Party. Besides the hon. Member for Northampton, there were the hon. Member for East Bradford, the hon. Member for the Cockermouth Division of Cumberland, Labour Members like the hon. Member for the Rhondda Valley, the hon. Members for Burnley and Middlesbrough, and others. The resolutions of the Conference did not satisfy the hon. Member for Northampton, but they did state distinctly that, as soon as practicable during the present Parliament, a step should be taken to get rid of the House of Lords. We know now what as soon as practicable means; it means when the cry will have the effect of turning defeat into victory. But, Sir, it is perfectly clear that at that time it was supposed to be the signal for immediate action. Was this resolution regarded by the Leaders of the Party as being the mere vagary of irresponsible politicians? The Prime Minister, as soon as he received the resolution, wrote, on June 29, to a very distinguished Member of the Liberal Party, Dr. Spence Watson, and said that the resolutions passed at the Conference formed a valuable indication of the feeling of the Liberal Party upon the question. It requires no astute consideration to see that the Leeds resolution was dictated from headquarters. From March down to November of last year this question of the attack on the House of Lords was, it was supposed, becoming the one question Her Majesty's Government had to deal with. I do not pause to remind the House how many Ministers have pointed to the action of the House of Lords as a stumbling-block to Home Rule, to Local Option, to Disestablishment, and to various other measures. The invitation of the Liberal Party was: "Let us deal with the House of Lords, and get all these questions solved." I have taken the House on to June 29. In August or July there was a demonstration in Hyde Park, which was not a great success, and certainly did not seem to evoke much enthusiasm among the democracy of the Metropolis. There was another demonstration, I believe, at Peckham, or in that neighbourhood; but beyond those two meetings there was not much display of public feeling. But Her Majesty's Ministers were still satisfied that they had got a cry which was going to rally the country on their side, and there was scarcely one of them who, during the Recess, did not speak and point out how fundamentally this question of the House of Lords was at the root of the policy of the Radical Party. I might quote from the speeches of nearly every one of them to show that I am right in my conclusion that the question was then prominently before the minds of Ministers. May I remind the House of two instances? On October 22, the Home Secretary, speaking in Scotland, stated that—

> "the question of the House of Lords occupied the largest space in the thoughts of thinking politicians."

Then came the classical utterance of the Prime Minister at Bradford, which I need not quote, for everyone is acquainted with it. But there was another Member of the Cabinet who spoke on the question as late as November 12—the Minister for War, and the right hon. Gentleman would never have spoken as he did unless he had consulted with the Cabinet as to what he should say. And let me note here, by the way, that, during the months of October and November, it was alleged that certain Members of our Party were circulating unfounded and slanderous statements to the effect that Ministers were not at one on this question—that there was a difference of opinion among them as to the policy to be pursued. The Home Secretary declared in a speech that there was absolutely no foundation in those statements, and that Ministers were at one on the subject. Well, what did the Secretary for War say? He said "the time had come when they could endure the present anomalous condition no longer." That was on November 12. But then the Forfar election had not taken place; the Brigg and the Evesham elections had not been decided. The right hon. Gentleman had suffered in mind so long and so keenly that, on November 12, he could bear it no longer; but he seems to bear it with much equanimity at the present time. Now, the Forfar election took place on November 17, and that of Brigg on December 8. On January 18 the Prime Minister went, I think, to Cardiff. His utterance there was the last despairing appeal before the Evesham election, and he used these words—

> "The intolerable disabilities and degradations, which make our campaign against the House of Lords inevitable."

I am sorry for the degradation of Ministers. I agree that they are disabled, but not that they are degraded.

I must say I think the language of the Prime Minister was somewhat hyperbolic; but, at all events, that was the position of Ministers before the election. I have now brought down the matter to January 18, and I have here to refer to a point which, though touched upon by one of the Members for Lancashire, requires further notice. There can be no doubt that Ministers had now begun to appreciate that matters were getting somewhat urgent. But the resources of civilisation were not exhausted. We observed in the official organs, as well as in the *Times*, certain inspired paragraphs announcing that an hon. and learned Member of this House had visited Downing Street and consulted the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and that on the next day he had been in consultation with the Prime Minister. I refer to the hon. and learned Member for Hackney (Mr. Moulton). Now, I am the last person to suggest that the hon. Member was writing to order, but I wish to ask this—Did the Prime Minister or the Chancellor of the Exchequer know the outlines of the hon. and learned Member's article before it was published, and, if they did not, do they approve of that article now? If they knew of the article before it was published, of course it must be taken as a semi-official utterance. It would not be the first time that Government have used a friendly pen for the purpose of expressing their views. I make no complaint against the Government, assuming that they knew of this article, for in that case they went to the best quarter they could for their purpose—they went to a learned lawyer. What did they go to him for? To ask him to draw a plea? Well, we lawyers speak of dilatory pleas, which are drawn when you are in difficulties, and when you want to put off a serious attack which is to be made upon you. The plea to which I call attention was what is termed a plea for deliberation. I make no sort of attack upon the Government for endeavouring to influence public opinion in this way. If the Government had nothing to do with the article, and say so, I shall, of course, accept the statement at once, and I shall use the article only as the utterance of a prominent Member of their Party upon whose assistance great reliance was placed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer during the Debates on the Finance Bill. There are some very remarkable passages in this article, which, I think I am entitled to say, was coincident with what I affirm was a change of opinion on the part of the Government. The first passage to which I will call attention is the passage in which the hon. and learned Member said that, if there was danger in appealing to the country upon the question of Home Rule, the dangers of forcing a speedy decision upon the more intricate and difficult question of the House of Lords were far greater. Does that represent the views of right hon. and hon. Members opposite? Do they think that if there was danger in appealing to the country on the question of Home Rule there would be greater danger in appealing suddenly to the country on the question of the House of Lords? If they did come to that conclusion they formed an opinion with which I heartily agree, for I assert that there is not the slightest ground for believing that this cry about the House of Lords has had the slightest effect in bringing to the side of the Government electors who would not otherwise have been prepared to give them support. The other passage, which I will read, is as follows:—

> "Even those who are most desirous that we should get rid of the House of Lords will not forgive a rash and unsuccessful appeal to the country on the ground that it was well-meant or was in response to their ambitions."

What is the remedy suggested, what is the course proposed, by the hon. and learned Member for Hackney as the way out of the difficulties? Here, again, the article smacks of Roseberyite influences. I am not aware that Lord Rosebery has ever gone quite so far as the hon. Member, but some of his utterances have raised doubts on the matter, and that makes this Amendment one of very great importance. We ought not to be kept in the dark on this matter. The House of Commons has a right to ask Her Majesty's Ministers for information. Ministers have been vapouring up and down the country on this subject for the past six months, and yet the Assembly which is to decide the question is to be kept in absolute ignorance. It seems to me absolutely impossible for Ministers to preserve the complete silence which has pervaded all their speeches in the House of Commons, whilst they have led the electors in the country to suppose that this was going to be the main matter which was immediately to be entered upon, and that it had to be disposed of in order that measures which the electors were supposed to want might be passed. I do not know whether, when this Debate comes to be canvassed, any one will hestitate to come to the conclusion that we have made good our case. We have submitted to this House that it is contrary to the public interest that Her Majesty's Advisers, while they have told the country that they do not hope to pass measures, should occupy the time of Parliament in discussing them. We have submitted that it is degrading this House, reducing it to a level to which it ought never to be reduced. We have further submitted that, proposals involving great constitutional changes having been proclaimed up and down the country, we in the House of Commons are entitled to a reasonable amount of information. I ask the House to come to the conclusion that the Amendment, however it may be answered in the Division lobby, has not been answered by argument. The Home Secretary, in heroic language, declared that the Government were not going to be tied to humdrum, hand-to-mouth, unambitious policies. Ambitious policies have wrecked many Ministers in years gone by, and they will wreck this Government. I regretted to hear the right hon. Gentleman use the word "humdrum." What does he mean by humdrum measures? I believe him to be as humane and sympathetic a man as sits in this House. Can anybody look upon or read with unmoved feelings the accounts from day to day of the distress in this country, the depression in trade, and the circumstances in which we are? It may prolong for a short time your life if you decline to deal with these questions, but it will not redound to your credit in the future. I say for myself, I would far rather take part in some humdrum scheme to relieve those out of work, and to restore languishing trade, than be a party to such heroic measures as One Man One Vote—schemes of which the right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues are so proud. But it is strange to hear a Minister talking of a hand-to-mouth policy. What have the Government been doing for the last 12 or 15 months? Will they honestly deny that theirs has been a day-to-day and hand-to-mouth policy? Looking at the promises that have been extorted from the Government with regard to legislation for Ireland, for Wales, and for Scotland, I say that they are an indication that Her Majesty's Government are living from hand to mouth. As the right hon. Member for West Birmingham said, I care not one bit about the feelings of Her Majesty's Government about the present Amendment. I want to defeat the Government as soon as I can, because I believe that their maintenance in Office is not for the good of the country; but I am quite satisfied it is in the interests of the Opposition, as a Party, that they should be allowed to go on for some time longer muddling the affairs of the nation. I do not suggest for a moment that right hon. Gentlemen opposite are clinging to Office for the sake of remuneration: I know they are men too honourable, and in their private life far above such suspicion; but I say that they are clinging to Office for the sake of power—that is, the semblance of power which they have not got. This Resolution, I suppose, will be defeated by the votes of those who have contributed nothing to the Debate, and have not listened to a single argument. It will result in a temporary triumph of the supporters of the Government; but I take leave to predict that the effect of concealing their policy will be to make the present Session absolutely abortive, to make their supposed crusade against the House of Lords a more ludicrous failure even than it has been already, and, when the judgment of history comes to be given upon this Government, to show that they were careless of their own reputation, and did not properly consider what was due from them to the country whose interests they had in charge.

Mr. J. PARKER SMITH (Lanark, Partick) expressed surprise that no answer was being given from the Treasury Bench to the exceedingly able, temperate, and courteous speech of the hon. and learned Member for the Isle of Wight. These tactics seemed to be an attempt at make-believe, to make it appear as if there was nothing in the attack. Those, however, who read the Debates would feel that something was lacking on the part of the Government and their supporters in this matter. In 1879 a strong Government was in power, with a great majority, but the signs of the times showed that that Government were losing the confidence of the country. Then it was asked—

> "Why are the Government not anxious to have the judgment of the country? It is because they know that the country is against them. If it be true, as they still say, that the country is in their favour, I say that, after the favourable reply that they would receive to their appeal, they would come back to Parliament far stronger for the purpose of giving effect to the principles that they hold to be true than they are at this moment. They know perfectly well that a favourable appeal will strengthen their hands; they know perfectly well that an unfavourable answer will be the end of their Ministerial existence; and it therefore requires no great wit on our part to judge why, when they have reached what I may almost call the Constitutional period, they do not choose to make an appeal at all."

That was the language of the right hon. Member for Midlothian, who was then in Opposition, whilst the Government of the day was ceasing to hold the confidence of the nation which they had enjoyed when they first came into power. The right hon. Gentleman was urging them if they had any faith in the principles of representation to go to the country, and either come back with a renewed expression of confidence from the country, which would enable them to carry through those Bills they had in hand, or else let them give place to other men in whom the country had real confidence. That was the view the right hon. Gentleman took in Opposition, and it was the view he held consistently and took also when he was in power. The same position, with the Liberal Party in power, had occurred a few years earlier, namely, in 1874. The Liberal Government, which had come in in 1868 with a tremendous majority, full of vigour and power, with the declared object of carrying through a variety of legislative measures that were then the boast of the whole of the united Liberal Party, had, owing to time and differences, become weak and divided. The right hon. Gentleman, the Member for Midlothian, a high-minded and high-spirited Minister, would not stand that position. In the beginning of 1874 there was a thunderbolt. An address from the right hon. Gentleman appeared in the *Times* one morning, dissolving Parliament, and stating elaborately the reasons that had led him to adopt that course. He said:—

> "The welfare of the country can never be effectually promoted by a Government which is not invested with adequate authority. That authority which was, in 1868, amply confided by the nation to the Liberal Party and its Leaders, if it has now sunk below the point necessary for the due defence and prosecution of the public interests, can in no way be so legitimately and effectually restored as by an appeal to the people, who, by their reply to such an appeal, may place beyond all challenge two great ques-

tions—the first, what they think of the manner in which the commission granted in 1868 has been executed; the second, what further commission they now think fit to give to their representatives, and to what hands its fulfilment, and the administration of the Government, are to be entrusted."

He went on to speak of the way in which the strength of the Government had been diminished, and then he continued :—

> "Of this diminution of strength we were painfully and sensibly reminded during the Session by the summary and rapid dismissal in the House of Lords of measures which had cost much time and labour to the House of Commons. But we remembered that in the years 1868 and 1870, when the mind of the country was unambiguously expressed, the House of Lords had, much to its honour, deferred to that expression upon matters of great moment, and I cannot doubt that it would have continued in this course had the isolated and less certain, but still frequent and fresh, indications of public opinion at single elections continued to be in harmony with the powerful and authentic, but now more remote, judgment of 1868."

That was the spirit in which the right hon. Gentleman in those days treated the House of Lords, and treated the question of confidence with the country. If the right hon. Member for Midlothian were still on the Treasury Bench he should expect from him and from the Government a higher spirit in regard to their position, not that clinging to the continuance of power which they saw now, but a greater readiness to go back to the country and find out what the feeling of the people truly was, and whether they really any longer enjoyed the confidence of the nation. The principle upon which the House of Lords had gone was that stated and accepted by the Member for Midlothian in the passage of the right hon. Gentleman's address of 1874 which he had just read. Ever since 1832 that had been the policy upon which they had acted. They had felt themselves free to criticise, and not bound by the mere fact that a Resolution had passed the House of Commons. They had felt themselves entitled to look a little deeper into the real facts of the situation, and to satisfy themselves whether the view of the House of Commons did or did not represent the real feeling of the nation. Where it represented the real feeling of the nation, Members of the House of Lords had given way. That was their policy in the first great struggle of 1832. Under the guidance of the Duke of Wellington they consistently followed that policy. Lord Derby in a most interesting letter, written in 1846, showed how, again and again, during the intermediate years when the Duke of Wellington had almost complete authority over the House of Lords, he induced the Members of that House to give way upon point after point, on which they themselves felt strongly, but on which it appeared the mind of the country was different from that of the House of Lords. That had been the action of the House of Lords in the past; and he saw not the slightest reason in anything which had happened, or in any utterance which had been made in the House of Lords lately, to suppose that would not be the policy of the House of Lords in the future. Right hon. gentlemen on the Treasury Bench talked about the usefulness of having got a measure through the House of Commons. If they wanted to see their measures passed into law, let them go to the country, come back with a majority, say of 100, then pass them through the House of Commons, and they would see how much difficulty those measures experienced when they got across the Central Lobby. If those measures were clearly declared as the will of the country, hon. Members would soon see that they would not find any too serious or too grave obstacles in the existing Constitution to them receiving the full force of law. There was something beyond all this. It was a fundamental principle of our public life that men should be in earnest—that when men announced a great change as being in their opinion essential, they should do their best to satisfy the nation at large that they really meant what they were saying. He did not believe in the policy of keeping projects up one's sleeve. It was in his opinion, the duty of public men, when they had fully made up their minds on a grievous question, to take the public into their confidence. He did not wish them to be in any too great hurry to state what were their views before they had fully made up their minds, but he thought that men upon whom rested the greatest responsibility, whose words had more influence upon the minds of their fellow-citizens than those of any other men, should not throw out vague hints of their desire to do something, and to await the decisions on certain points of caucuses and wire-pullers before they made up their minds in which direction a change should take place. Statesmen ought to make up their minds clearly, and announce their views in a manly and straightforward way, trusting subsequently to the newspapers and to their followers to work out the details. It did more harm to the morality of public life than anything else could do to find men taking hold of questions of enormous importance, declaring their desire to do things which fundamentally affected the Constitution of the country, and at the same time to put them off, to postpone them indefinitely in the light-hearted way in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer postponed such a casual question as the Payment of Members. There were some things which would wait indefinitely, but there were others which must be carried through at once, if men were in earnest concerning them. Questions might be raised affecting a man's honour. What would be thought of him if he were to postpone arriving at a settlement concerning them until he had done all his other business? It was not his duty to express any view upon the tactics of the Government. Ministers might think it was better tactics to hold on for a few months—a good many of their friends differed from them on that point—but it was not within his province to deal with the question of tactics. As a matter of public honesty and honour, when fundamental questions were raised, it was, in his opinion, the duty of honourable public men to press them forward, to express their opinions to the best of their power, and indeed, to follow the example which had always been set in previous times, whenever any great question had come to the front, and not to shilly-shally, and give the impression of merely seeking to put off the evil day.

*SIR F. POWELL (Wigan) condemned the Government for their silence through the night. A powerful and remarkable speech had been made by the hon. and learned Member for the Isle of Wight, and, contrary to Parliamentary usage and courtesy, by which a speech from one Front Bench was replied to from the other, the Government had not thought it well to meet, if they could meet, the arguments of the hon. and learned Member. The policy which had been adopted by the Government throughout the night was the policy of delay and procrastination. By all the rules of Parliamentary Debate, the answer to a speech ought to come at once, while the effect of the speech was on the minds of the House; but the expectation of the Government was that, by delaying till Monday, the impression of the able speech of the hon. and learned Member for the Isle of Wight would have passed away. They had heard of the Government of all the talents. The present Government had not only all the talents, but that other great power of an impressive and profound silence. He did not believe that, in the whole history of Parliament, there was another occasion on which important and weighty speeches, such as those delivered that night, had been left unanswered, and that Ministers had taken themselves to the joys of other places rather than attend to their duties in the House of Commons. He was sure that, when the country read of the action of Government, there would follow a widespread dissatisfaction with their policy of silence. He happened to be in Bradford at the time Lord Rosebery launched his attack on the House of Lords, and had had the opportunity of conversing with many Members of the Liberal Party about the speech. Without betraying any secrets, he could say that the expectations of those Gentlemen, with regard to the consequences of that speech, had been exactly the same as his own expectations. He expected nothing would follow the speech; and that had been the impression, also, of Members of the Liberal Party to whom he had spoken on the subject. But it was the duty of the Government, having spoken in such a manner through the Prime Minister, not to delay in taking action. Parliament ought to have been summoned in the autumn of 1894, to consider the great Constitutional issue that had been laid before the country by the Prime Minister at Bradford; but, instead of doing that, the Government proposed to delay the matter until the autumn of 1895. If they looked back on what had taken place in America at the end of the Eighteeenth Century, when a great Constitution was being moulded for the people of that country, they would not find that there had been any delay or procrastination; whereas, in this case, every mode of delay was being resorted to by the Government. The country was entitled to know what was the Constitution under which we were to live, and what was the plan of the Government—whether the Government intended to abolish, for all practical purposes, the House of Lords, and to govern the country by one Chamber only, or whether there was to be government by two Chambers, with the House of Commons retained in its present power and another Chamber acting instead of the present House of Lords. The question of the House of Lords ought to be formulated. The House ought to know whether there was to be a change in the constitution of that Assembly—whether the representative principle was to be introduced there, in whole or in part; whether the Peers of this country were to be exiled altogether from that ancient Chamber, or whether only a small portion of them were to remain after the analogy of the Scotch and Irish peerages. The country ought not to be kept in suspense, and all minor issues ought to be postponed. If the Government chose to abandon the plan of altering or destroying the House of Lords, then let them proceed with other legislation; but if they intended to proceed with the policy which they had sketched out, then let the country have an opportunity of understanding their policy at the earliest possible moment, and of forming a decision upon it, in order that Parliament might proceed to the great work of alteration and reconstruction, or else to the wiser method of at once meeting the terrible exigencies of the present moment. At a time when there was so much distress and sorrow, when deaths were occurring in the streets from starvation, it was not right to leave this question in suspense. As to the general question of the defence of the House of Lords, he found, from reading the speeches of the hon. Gentlemen opposite, that they denounced the House of Lords with vague rhetoric and wild declamation, and showed that they had not mastered the history of the case, and were entirely ignorant of the facts. They said that the House of Lords had resisted the will of the people; but they did not condescend to particulars. He was sure that the electors of Great Britain were in entire accord with the House of Lords in what they had done in respect to the Home Rule Bill. As the Representative of a mining and manufacturing district, he was sure that a large proportion of the workingmen was in favour of the action of the House of Lords upon the Employers' Liability Bill. And as to the Local Government Act of the present Government, on the questions which had been at issue between the two Houses in regard to that measure, the country was in favour of the House of Lords rather than the House of Commons. The proposals eventually sanctioned by the House of Lords were, in fact, the original proposals of the Government themselves. How could it be said that the Government were right in their original proposals, and that the House of Lords were wrong in sanctioning those proposals? He wished that those who condemned the House of Lords would first go to school and read some of the great text-books on the subject. Whig and Tory historians were alike unknown to these hon. Gentlemen. He believed that the House of Lords would, for many years, continue to exercise their great authority in this country under wise and prudent guidance. It must be remembered that if the House of Lords was to be reformed and reconstructed, and became a more powerful Assembly, the House of Commons would become weaker. Were those who were endeavouring to compass an alteration in the House of Lords fully realising the fact that the accomplishment of their object was really a defeat of that which they desired—namely, an increase of the strength of the House of Commons? He believed the relations between the House of Lords and the House of Commons would continue to exist during many centuries in the future, as they had existed during many centuries in the past. It was worth remembering that the temporary cessation of the House of Lords during the Commonwealth period was not a circumstance which led to any increase of liberty or of improvement in the freedom of the people. As 200 years ago that model period of violence on the one hand, led to reaction on the other, so now an attack on the House of Lords, whether successful or not, would end, not in the weakening, but in the strengthening, of that great body—not in the enfeebling of their authority, but in giving greater strength to that which they possessed and enjoyed.

Sir F. Powell.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned." *(Mr. L. H. Courtney.)*

Motion agreed to.

Debate adjourned till Monday next.

CASES STATED (APPEAL) (IRELAND) BILL.

Bill read 2°.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE UNEMPLOYED.

Ordered,—That the Select Committee on Distress for Want of Employment do consist of 25 Members: That Mr. Acland, Mr. Bartley, Mr. Benn, Mr. Billson, Mr. Thomas Henry Bolton, Mr. Boscawen, Mr. Bousfield, Mr. John Burns, Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, Mr. Crean, Mr. Keir Hardie, Mr. Heneage, Mr. Wootton Isaacson, Mr. Jackson, Mr. Lawrence, Mr. Logan, Mr. Mather, Mr. Pickersgill, Mr. David Randell, Mr. Renshaw, Mr. Round, Mr. Whiteley, Mr. John Wilson (Durham), Mr. John Wilson (Govan), and Mr. Stuart-Wortley, be Members of the said Committee: That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records: That seven be the quorum.—*(Mr. T. E. Ellis.)*

Mr. **KEIR HARDIE** (West Ham, S.) said, he would not move for an alteration in the composition of the Committee at present, as it was important that it should get to work at once; but he would move the addition of certain names, so as to give the Committee a standing and prestige which it did not possess at the present time, and thereby add more weight to it.

House adjourned at Twelve o'clock,
till Monday next.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 18th February 1895.

ROYAL MESSAGE.

THE LORD STEWARD OF THE HOUSEHOLD (The Marquess of BREADALBANE) brought up Her Majesty's reply, as follows, to their Lordships' Address of Thanks for the Speech from the Throne:—

> "I have received, with great satisfaction, the loyal and dutiful expression of your thanks for the Speech with which I have opened the present Session of Parliament."

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.

Ordered, That the Standing Orders Committee be appointed.—*(The Earl of Morley.)*

COMMITTEE OF SELECTION.

Ordered, That the Committee of Selection be appointed.—*(The Earl of Morley.)*

HOUSE OF LORDS OFFICES.

Ordered, That the Select Committee on House of Lords Offices be appointed. *(The Earl of Morley.)*

STANDING COMMITTEE.

Ordered, That a Standing Committee be appointed.—*(The Earl of Morley.)*

FISHING VESSELS UNDER FOREIGN FLAGS.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN asked whether a fishing vessel sailing under a foreign flag was entitled to the same privileges as to landing fish in Scottish ports, whether it were commanded and owned by foreigners or by British subjects; and whether the Government would endeavour to secure, by Convention or otherwise, that all foreign vessels which were permitted to land fish in Scottish ports should conform to the regulations as to trawling and otherwise laid down by the Fishery Board of Scotland or by Statute for British vessels? He said that the subject to which his questions referred was very important to Scottish fishermen, and, indeed, to all British fishermen. There were certain parts of the sea adjoining Scotland, but outside the exclusively British fishery limits, which were by International Law open to all vessels, but which, under a bye-law of the Scottish Fishery Board, made in pursuance of an Act of Parliament, were closed to British trawlers. Foreign vessels, however, could trawl within these extra-territorial waters. That being the case, he wished to know whether foreigners were entitled to land in Scottish ports fish caught in these waters. By the eighth section of an Act of Parliament passed in 1889, it was declared—

> "That it shall be unlawful to land or sell in Scotland any fish caught in contravention of this Act or any bye-law."

Prima facie, therefore, it would appear not to be possible to sell in Scotland fish caught in contravention of the Act. It was, however, the opinion of counsel that foreigners in foreign vessels were entitled to land in this country fish caught in waters closed to British fishermen under the bye-laws. If that opinion was well founded foreigners enjoyed a very unfair advantage over British fishermen. A further point for consideration was this—What was the definition of a foreign fishing vessel? Was it enough, to constitute a boat a foreign boat, that it should fly a foreign flag; and was the action unaffected by the nationality of the owner and the captain?

THE LORD PRIVY SEAL (Lord TWEEDMOUTH) said, that the noble Earl's question was founded upon a mere hypothesis, because no instance had occurred, as far as he could ascertain, in which a foreign boat, having fish caught in extra-territorial waters, where fishing was prohibited under the bye-laws of the Scottish Fishery Board, had attempted to land such fish at a British port. He was aware that the Moray Firth Fishing Association asserted that such a case had occurred, but on inquiry he had found that there was no reason to believe that there was any truth in the statement. There was no foundation whatever for the belief that the particular vessel referred to had caught fish within the prohibited extra-territorial waters. He thought that foreign-owned vessels, fishing under foreign flags, were not likely to fish often in these waters, which were very close to the Scottish coasts. Foreign vessels were not likely to fish there for the purpose of profit. He understood the noble Earl to be of opinion that Clause 8 of the Act of 1889 was intended to prohibit the landing of fish caught in these circumstances in Scottish ports. There seemed, however, to be no doubt that that clause was of no effect as against foreign-owned fishing boats. The noble Earl asked whether there would be any difference between vessels owned and manned by British subjects but fishing under a foreign flag, and foreign fishing boats manned by foreign fishermen under a foreign captain. He thought there would be a great difference between the two cases. In the first place, he did not believe that a foreign Power would consent to allow the use of her flag to an English or Scottish fishing boat. But supposing that such an advantage were granted by a foreign Power to the owners of such a boat, the Act would apply and the law would operate *in personam* against the skipper and crew. The noble Earl asked whether the Government would be prepared to enter into a new Convention on the subject of fishing in the North Sea. In his opinion there were many subjects on which it was desirable that there should be agreements among all the Powers whose subjects fished in the North Sea, the greatest fishing ground in the world. He could not, however, shut his eyes to the fact that the Convention of 1868 was not agreed to without difficulty, and he thought it would be a very serious matter to consent to re-open such a subject as this on the grounds set up by the noble Earl. As he began by saying, the noble Earl's question was founded upon a mere hypothesis, and to enter into negotiations to provide against a remote contingency was a course which he could not lightly agree to take.

THE MARQUESS OF HUNTLEY believed that the Lord Privy Seal was in error in thinking that no case such as that contemplated by the noble Earl had yet occurred. He was informed that a case had occurred and was to be the subject of litigation.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN complained of the indirect character of the answers given to the questions by the Lord Privy Seal.

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON VACCINATION.

LORD ASHBOURNE asked when the Royal Commission on Vaccination was appointed, when it commenced its labours, when its Report was agreed to, when it was sent to the printers, and what is the cause of the delay in its presentation. He observed that the Commission was appointed nearly six years ago, that its Report was awaited with great interest, and that the reason for the delay in presenting it was not understood.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL) said, that when he became Lord Chancellor he wished to discontinue serving on the Commission, but he had remained a Member of it in compliance with the request of his colleagues. The Chair, when he was away, had been taken by Sir James Paget, than whom no one was better qualified to fill the position. The Commission was appointed on May 29, 1889, and held its first meeting on June 26. No doubt a very considerable time had elapsed since then, but if his noble and learned Friend had seen the Blue-books that had been published from time to time he must have observed how wide had been the field of the Inquiry. It was absolutely necessary that the Commission should prolong its investigations, for it was not thought desirable to shut out evidence, and it was felt to be expedient that no excuse should be given to the supporters or opponents of the present system for saying that they had not been fully heard. The Inquiry, then, had been very exhaustive. Even the Blue-books did not give a complete idea of its extent, because the cases of injury from vaccination that had been brought before the Commission had been specially investigated by a medical man appointed for the purpose, and, of course, the reports that had been received from him had required and received very careful examination. When the Commission was approaching the conclusion of its evidence, and, indeed, since the oral evidence was concluded, there had been in several parts of the country outbreaks of small-pox, and it was thought desirable by the Commission that a careful inquiry should be made by skilled persons into these epidemics. These inquiries necessarily, in order to be of any value, occupied some considerable time, because, of course, they had to range over the whole period of the continuance of the epidemic. The Report of the last of these inquiries was complete, and he believed would be very shortly in the hands of the members of the Commission. Steps had been taken for the preparation of the Report of the Commission, but there was an enormous mass of matter to be dealt with, going often into points of very great detail, which, nevertheless, had to be noticed and considered. Several of the Members of the Commission, moreover, were gentlemen whose time was fully occupied, and it was impossible to make more than a reasonable demand upon their services. But the Commission, individually and as a whole, were desirous to see their labours brought to a close, and the Report would be presented as expeditiously as possible, consistently with its being complete and satisfactory.

LORD ASHBOURNE asked for some more definite statement as to how soon the Report might be expected. If the Report was only to be commenced when the last of the supplementary inquiries into different epidemics of smallpox was received, they really might not see the document for a lifetime.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR could assure his noble and learned Friend that there would be no unnecessary delay, and that the Commission would conclude their labours and issue their Report at the earliest possible period. He could not give any more definite information than that.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND).

LORD TWEEDMOUTH moved the Second Reading of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1894, Amendment Bill, which had already passed the House of Commons. The object was to explain the use of the word "in" in Subsection 4 of Section 56 of the Local Government Act. Some thought the Section meant that in every ward there should be a polling-place, but that was not the intention of the principal Act, and such an interpretation of it would involve a great deal of unnecessary expense. The Bill would remove the doubt which had arisen.

Bill read 2ª.

LANDS CLAUSES (TAXATION OF COSTS) BILL.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR, in moving the Second Reading of the Lands Clauses (Taxation of Costs) Bill, said its object was to assimilate the payment of fees on taxation of costs in certain inquiries under Statute to the mode of payment established in other cases. At present certain fees were paid, not by stamps but in cash, and the Master who taxed the Bill was entitled to keep these cash payments, and they did not go, like fees paid in stamps, into the Exchequer. The Bill was brought forward at the suggestion of the Master, who now had the benefit of the present system. It was a public-spirited act on his part, because the effect of the measure would be a small but certain pecuniary loss to himself. He believed all the Masters approved of the change.

Bill read 2ª.

DISTRESS BILL.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR moved the Second Reading of a Bill to amend the Act which gives to County Court Judges power to grant certificates to persons authorising them to levy distress, and which imposed a penalty for distress made by unauthorised persons. The Act enabled the County Court Judge to cancel the certificate of any bailiff in case of violence, extortion, or misconduct. It had been thought by some that the word "misconduct," when taken in conjunction with the preceding words, did not give the County Court Judge power to cancel the certificate in case of non-payment or other offences by the bailiff, but only if there had been something in the nature of violence or extortion. Now, there might be repeated acts which, though no one of them could perhaps be said to involve misconduct, yet nevertheless indicated that he was not a fit person to carry out a distress, and hardship and trouble might in consequence be brought upon the poor. The Bill accordingly proposed that the County Court Judge who granted the certificate should also have power to cancel it. The Bill further enables rules to be made, by which a certificate, instead of being issued at large, might be given for a term, so that it would be necessary for a bailiff to get a renewal of it.

Bill read 2ª.

LICENSING ACT (1872) AMENDMENT BILL.

Bill to amend the Licensing Act, 1872—presented *(Lord Norton)*; read 1ª. [No. 17]

House adjourned Five minutes before Five of the clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, 18th February 1895.

At Fifteen minutes past Three of the clock, in the absence of MR. SPEAKER, MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. J. W. MELLOR) took the Chair.

QUESTIONS.

VACCINATION OF PRISONERS IN SCOTLAND.

MR. C. H. HOPWOOD (Lancashire, S.E., Middleton): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland regarding the death of Christina Thomson, on New Year's Day, at 110, Port Dundas Street, Glasgow, after vaccination or re-vaccination in prison about 12 days before, while she was suffering from inflammation of the lungs of some months' standing; what precaution is or will be taken to examine the prisoner beforehand, so as to avoid operating upon a diseased prisoner; is it the rule of the prisons that persons imprisoned for the short period of a month, or less, should be vaccinated or re-vaccinated; and, will he specify the Law relating to Scotland which authorises the compulsory re-vaccination of anyone in prison or elsewhere?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. O. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): Christina Thomson, when admitted into the prison of Glasgow on 13th December, 1894, with a sentence of seven days' imprisonment, was examined by the Acting Medical Officer, who found her heart and lungs to be sound and her general health good. It is not the rule of the Scottish Prison Service that persons imprisoned for the short period of a month, or less, should be vaccinated or re-vaccinated; but during the late outbreak of Smallpox in Glasgow the Prison Medical Officer, on the request of the Medical Officer of Health, was authorised to vaccinate prisoners coming to the prison from infected districts of the city and prisoners who did not bear evidence of having been successfully vaccinated; but in every case the full consent of the prisoner was to be obtained. Christina Thomson was vaccinated on the afternoon of the day of her admission, with calf lymph, after her consent had been asked and obtained. Her vaccination was quite successful, and up to her discharge on the 20th December her health continued good and she took all her food. A post-mortem examination was made, by order of the Procurator Fiscal, under warrant from the Sheriff, two days after the death, when it was ascertained that she died from effusion into the pericardium, and not from vaccination. In answer to the last paragraph of the question, there is no Statute in Scotland compelling re-vaccination.

PARISH COUNCIL AND CHURCH SCHOOLROOM.

MR. C. B. B. McLAREN (Leicester, Bosworth): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether his attention has been called to the case of the Parish Council of Sapcote, in Leicestershire, who were refused by the Rector of the parish the use of one of the three church schoolrooms on the first and third Tuesday in the month, on the ground that a Bible-class was usually held in the smallest of the three rooms on those nights, and who, having accordingly altered their day of meeting to Wednesday, and having given 13 days' notice of this to the Rector, found the door looked by him on the first actual night of meeting, and were informed by the Rector through the locked door that they could not enter because a tea was being held in some part of the building; and whether the Education Department have laid down any rules under Section 4 (3) of the Act of last Session as to what is reasonable notice?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. A. H. D. ACLAND, York, W. R., Rotherham): No question has as yet been referred to the Education Department from Sapcote. The Department has explained, through a circular, what would be considered reasonable notice under the Local Government Act of 1894, with a view to the avoidance of friction as far as possible in these cases. I am sending the hon. Member copies of this circular.

OUT-DOOR RELIEF.

MR. C. J. S. DODD (Essex, Maldon): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he will consider the propriety of revising the Poor Law Orders, so as to allow of a discretion which they do not now possess, in Boards of Guardians, under proper restrictions, when unable to find work for them, to grant for a short period (say three weeks) out-door relief to able-bodied men and their families, where such men are temporarily unemployed, or whether he will endeavour to obtain the opinion of the Committee which it is intended to appoint on the Unemployed thereon, and upon the general question of revising the Poor Law Orders, so as to give further discretion to Boards of Guardians?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central): It appears to me that the provisions of the Orders at present in force with reference to relief will necessarily be the subject of consideration by the Committee on the Unemployed, as their appointment extends to considering and reporting as to the powers at present possessed by Local Authorities, and whether any steps should be taken, by changes in legislation or administration, with a view to dealing with the evils arising from want of employment.

SALT IN THE STREETS DURING FROST.

MR. J. W. CROMBIE (Kincardineshire): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board, whether he is aware of the injury done to horses and dogs by salt being thrown on the streets to melt the snow, especially in provincial towns with tramways; and whether the Local Government Board can take any steps to prevent it?

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE: There are many districts where the local authorities have made by-laws under the Public Health Act, 1875, with a view of preventing nuisance from melted snow on foot-pavements; and in London by-laws have in many districts been made, under the Public Health (London) Act, 1891, which apply to the carriage-way as well as the footway. I have no power to compel the making of such by-laws or the enforcement of the by-laws by the local authority when they have been made.

MR. J. W. CROMBIE: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, whether municipal authorities in Scotland have power to prevent salt being thrown on the streets by tramway companies and others, thus causing serious damage to the feet of dogs and horses; and whether, if this is the case, he can give any hope of dealing with the matter in the Bill about to be introduced to amend the Local Government Acts?

SIR G. O. TREVELYAN: I am not aware of any public Statute conferring special powers on municipal authorities in regard to the point referred to by the hon. Member, but if such a practice were to amount to a public nuisance, these authorities would no doubt be able under their general powers to regulate the matter. I see no occasion to introduce the subject into the County Councils Bill.

SAMOA.

SIR T. ESMONDE (Kerry, W.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, if any arrangement has been come to with reference to the ownership of land in Samoa between the various foreign nationalities interested in these islands; and, if so, what is the nature of it; if the harbour of Pago Pago is still in the hands of the United States; and, if not, who is to obtain the reversion of their interest in it; if it is a fact that Tamasese is in rebellion against the Government of Malietoa; that arms and ammunition have been imported into the islands, and money subscribed to carry on a war; and whether, in view of the probable immediate outbreak of hostilities, a British warship will be sent to Apia to protect

Australasian interests there; if there is any truth in the report that Germany is about to annex the islands; if Her Majesty's Government is still prepared to insist upon the maintenance of Samoan independence, as guaranteed by international agreement; and whether, in the event of any departure from that agreement, the consent of the Australasian Colonies will be first obtained?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, Sir E. GREY (Northumberland, Berwick): The Land Commission in Samoa has, after an exhaustive examination of claims to ownership of land, sent in its Report to the Supreme Court, and no special arrangement between the Powers is needed on this point. The United States Government claim an exclusive right to occupy Pago Pago as a naval and coaling station under their Treaty with Samoa. There has been no intimation of an intention to surrender this claim, and there is no arragement as to reversion. The country is in an unsettled state, but the latest Reports make no mention of hostilities nor of Tamasese being in rebellion. Proposals for the more effective exclusion of arms and ammunition are under the serious consideration of the Treaty Powers. Nothing is known of subscriptions for war purposes. H.M.S. *Wallaroo* has been ordered to remain in the Samoan group as long as necessary. There is no truth in the report that Germany is about to annex Samoa. The Berlin Act is still in force, and there is no intention on our part of departing from it. Her Majesty's Government have every desire to consult the interests of the Australasian Colonies; but I cannot give any such promise as that asked for, with reference to a contingency which has not arisen.

THE FRESCOES IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

DR. R. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works, what has been the result of the examination and treatment of the Frescoes in the House of Lords by Professor Church.

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. H. J. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): I propose to lay Professor Church's Reports on these Frescoes before Parliament immediately.

MR. R. G. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.) asked if the right hon. Gentleman's attention had been drawn to the fact that on the upper landing of the Committee Room stairs, eight of the nine Frescoes, which cost £1,000 each, were peeling and in a dilapidated condition?

MR. H. J. GLADSTONE: Yes, and I am afraid those Frescoes are past repair.

SCHOOL CHILDREN AND THE FROST.

MR. J. C. HOZIER (Lanarkshire, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, whether he can make any allowance for attendances on the part of children who, through the severity of the weather and the state of the roads, are, especially in the rural districts in Scotland, unable to attend school at this season?

SIR G. O. TREVELYAN: As the hon. Member is aware, it is not now necessary for children to have made a certain number of attendances in order to earn grants for a school. A proportionate deduction is made from the required number of school openings if a school has to be closed owing to severity of weather or the state of the roads. If a school opening is held the registers must be marked. But, if owing to very exceptional circumstances, very few children can reach school, we shall not object to some instruction being given to them and shall not hold it to constitute a school opening. In this case the teacher must mark out the column of attendance in the register; and a note of the circumstances, and of the number of children present, must be made in the log-book at once, and signed by the correspondent, or a manager, as soon as possible. Where an inspection takes place shortly after the interruption of attendance by stormy weather the inspectors would make due allowance.

ARMOUR-PIERCING PROJECTILES.

MR. R. W. HANBURY (Preston): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he can state whether projectiles are still being procured by the British Government from French manufacturers; and, if so, what are the kinds of projectile and the quantity ordered of each kind; and what is the reason for giving these orders to foreign manufacturers?

*The CIVIL LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Mr. Edmund Robertson, Dundee): The last order given to foreign manufacturers for projectiles was on the 28th February 1893, to the St. Chamond Company for 320 armour-piercing projectiles. There is no present intention of giving any further orders to foreign manufacturers.

DISMISSAL OF AN IRISH LIGHTHOUSE OFFICIAL.

Mr. THOMAS J. HEALY (Wexford, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been drawn to the case of Mr. John F. Harris, lately stationed at Slyne Head Lighthouse, who has been dismissed by the Irish Lights Board, in consequence of charges of drunkenness and absence from duty; if he is aware that Harris states that he has been a teetotaller for the past 11 years, and that the only absence from duty which can be alleged against him is, that on one occasion he went, on the instruction of his superior officer, a distance of about 20 yards from the lighthouse for the purpose of clearing a lobster pot; and that the only evidence against Harris is that of two men, both of whom have been repeatedly fined for drunkenness, and one of whom was in prison for nine months on a charge of murder; whether Harris was afforded any opportunity of clearing himself of the charges brought against him; and whether he will order a sworn inquiry into the case with a view of having Harris re-instated?

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. J. Bryce, Aberdeen, S.): I have no control over the discipline of the Lighthouse Staff in Ireland. I have, however, received a letter from the Commissioners of Irish Lights, in which they state that the specific charges against Mr. Harris were of drunkenness and quitting the station in a boat. The charges were investigated at the station. The keepers of the station as well as Mr. King, the boat contractor, and his two men, were duly examined, and their evidence was corroborative of the charges preferred. Mr. Harris was duly afforded an opportunity to clear himself, but he failed to do so, and though he did affirm that he was a teetotaller, he produced nothing in support of that statement. The Commissioners further say that they have no reason to undervalue the evidence of the two witnesses referred to. I have no power to order an Inquiry.

Mr. T. J. HEALY: What authority does he give for his statements?

Mr. BRYCE: Only what he says in his letter. I am willing to show it to the hon. Member.

Mr. T. J. HEALY: Can the right hon. Gentleman inquire into the matter?

Mr. BRYCE: I am sorry I have no power. The matter rests with the Irish Commissioners.

Mr. T. J. HEALY: Is there no authority over them?

[No answer was given.]

WAGES AND GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS.

Mr. J. CALDWELL (Lanark, Mid.): I beg to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty, whether complaint has been made to the Admiralty that the Clyde Bridge Steel Works and Mossend Steel Works, who were contractors or sub-contractors under J. and G. Thomson (Limited), engineers and shipbuilders, Clydebank, near Glasgow, for the supply of steel plates for Government Contracts, were employing non-Union men, and paying less than Trades Union rate of wages; whether the Admiralty have investigated said complaint; and whether the firms in question have or have not failed to comply with the Resolution of the House of 3rd February 1891?

Mr. E. ROBERTSON: Steps have been taken by the Admiralty to investigate the complaint that the firms referred to pay less than the current wages of the district, but no conclusion has yet been arrived at.

IRISH POSTMASTERSHIPS.

Dr. J. E. KENNY (Dublin, College Green): I beg to ask the Postmaster General if he will explain why it was that, although the candidates for the vacancy which occurred about six months ago in the Postmastership of Bagnalstown, or Bagenalstown, County Carlow, were officially informed that the appointment to the Postmastership of offices of the class of Bagenalstown was given only to persons already in the service of the Department, a person entirely unconnected with postal service was nevertheless subsequently appointed; will he state why the rule was departed from in this case; and, on whose recommendation the appointment was made?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. A. MORLEY, Nottingham, E.): In Ireland, although there is no actual rule, it is usual to appoint persons already in the service of the Department to Postmasterships with a salary of £100 or more. At Bagnalstown the salary was only raised, on the present vacancy, from £90 to £100, and, as the circumstance of the addition to the salary was not locally known, and expectation had in consequence been formed that a local candidate would be selected, I thought it right to appoint Mr. Joyce, who was officially reported as possessing all the qualifications necessary for a good Postmaster.

MR. L. P. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.) asked if the right hon. Gentleman was aware that a circular was sent to a number of applicants for the position stating that the appointment would be limited to persons already in the service of the Department?

MR. A. MORLEY replied, that he appointed a local man after carefully considering all the facts.

THE FISHING INDUSTRY IN SLIGO.

MR. B. COLLERY (Sligo, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what is the amount expended by the Congested Districts Board in connection with the fishing industry in the County of Sligo, for the years ending 31st December, 1893 and 1894, respectively; whether he is aware that the County of Sligo contains a large and poor fishing population along its coast, extending from Donegal to Mayo, a distance of 60 miles; and, whether the Congested Districts Board, when appealed to by the Sligo Board of Guardians to erect a pier or slip for the use of those people, stated they had no funds for engineering purposes?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): Fishery loans, amounting to £142 and £54 were issued during the years 1893 and 1894, respectively, in the County of Sligo, and grants amounting to £5,000 were sanctioned for the improvement of Inishmurray landing-place, and Mullaghmore Harbour. A fish-curing station was also opened on the coast, and the expenses incidental to the station, inclusive of the salary of a curer, and the purchase of fish, came to £140. It is further proposed to open a curing station at Inishmurray. I am informed that the reply sent to the Sligo Board of Guardians was, that the undertaking of engineering or other works, with the object of affording immediate relief by the employment of persons suffering from exceptional temporary distress, was not one of the means in which the Congested Districts Board were empowered to spend their funds.

THE SALE OF ARMS IN IRELAND.

MR. M. M. BODKIN (Roscommon, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland why the application of Mr. Thomas R. Jones, of Elphin Street, Strokestown, County Roscommon, for a licence to sell arms was refused; and if he will kindly direct that the matter shall be favourably reconsidered?

MR. J. MORLEY: I am informed that the Constabulary were unable to recommend the granting of this licence because the applicant was a person living in a small tenement house which was considered unsuitable for the business of a dealer in arms, and because there was already one such dealer in Strokestown.

THE IRISH AND AMERICAN MAILS.

MR. W. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is in a position to make any statement regarding the American and Irish Mails *via* Queenstown, Kingstown, and Holyhead; and whether acceleration and increased accommodation are being considered?

MR. A. MORLEY: I am not at present in a position to make any statement. My object is, to obtain the desired acceleration, and accommodation at least as good as that which is afforded by the vessel now performing the service.

MR. FIELD: Has the right hon. Gentleman any idea when he will be able to make a definite statement? The route has been under the consideration of various corporations for a year and a half past, and the right hon. Gentleman did not seem to be able to make up his mind.

Mr. A. MORLEY: I will make a statement as soon as I come to terms with the new contractors.

Mr. FIELD: Is there any likelihood of coming to terms in the immediate future?

Mr. T. SEXTON (Kerry, N.): I beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether since he received the original tender from the Dublin Steam Packet Company he has received or invited any other tenders?

Mr. A. MORLEY: No, Sir, I have not asked for further tenders; I have had, however, a further interview with the Dublin Steam Packet Company, with the result that they have made new offers. These are now being very carefully considered, and I hope in a short time to be able to ask them to come and see me again.

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM.

Mr. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether work was resumed last Autumn at the South Kensington Museum, as promised by him ("Hansard," vol. xxi., p. 687), so as to leave everything ready for the commencement of these buildings as soon as the money was voted by the House of Commons; and, what sum is to be taken in the coming year's Estimates for the completion of these buildings in accordance with the pledge of the present President of the Local Government Board in March 1894, on behalf of the Government?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir W. Harcourt, Derby) said, the demands upon the Estimates under other heads had proved so heavy that it had been found necessary to restrict the expenditure on bricks and mortar to the lowest possible point, and he feared that it would not be possible to undertake any large expenditure in connection with South Kensington Museum at present.

Mr. BARTLEY: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether it is not the fact that last year a certain estimate was allowed to pass on the distinct pledge for the Government that this year there would be a vote for this building?

Sir W. HARCOURT: It was intended to do so, but, as we were reminded the other night, we ought to cut our coat according to our cloth, and the hon. Member must allow me to know what our cloth is.

COCOA-NUT MATS FROM BELGIUM.

Mr. J. POWELL WILLIAMS: On behalf of the Member for the Sudbury Division of Suffolk (Mr. W. C. Quileer), I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that cocoanut mats made by prisoners in the so-called Agricultural Colonies of Belgium are imported into this country in large quantities, and sold and resold at a price with which no free labour can compete, without any mark upon them denoting the country of origin; whether, considering that these mats are of English standard sizes and descriptions, a mark upon the wrapper containing a number of mats is a sufficient compliance with the Merchandise Marks Act; and, whether he will take steps to insure that each individual mat so imported shall be distinctly marked to show that it is made in Belgium, and for that purpose will amend, if necessary, the Merchandise Marks Act?

Mr. J. BRYCE: The Board of Trade have no later particulars of exports of these mats from Belgium than are contained in Sir F. Plunkett's Report of 16th August, 1893, nor have they any data as to the amount of such mats imported into this country. The Merchandise Marks Act does not make compulsory the marking of goods, but only ensures that any mark placed upon the goods shall be true. As has been frequently explained to the House, the proposal to amend the Merchandise Marks Act by making marking compulsory was condemned by the Committee which sat in 1890.

THE COLONIES AND JUDICIAL OFFICES.

Mr. STANLEY LEIGHTON (Shropshire, Oswestry): I beg to ask the Under Secretary for the Colonies, whether Her Majesty's Government will consider the expediency of communicating with Colonial Governments with a view of endeavouring to arrange a system by which the services of persons who have held high judicial office in the Colonies may be secured on the Bench of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, in accordance with the intention of the 3rd and 4th Will. IV., c. 41?

THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR THE COLONIES (MR. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): Her Majesty's Government have this subject under their earnest and active consideration.

OCEAN DERELICTS.

MR. J. C. MACDONA (Southwark, Rotherhithe): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade, whether he is aware that, on the 14th instant, the ship *Norfolk Island*, from Adelaide, upon her arrival at Queenstown on that date, reported having met with, in latitude 51.12 N., and longitude 10.23 W., right in the track of ocean-going steamers off the coast of Ireland, a derelict of about 150 tons register, with no sign of life on Board; what steps have the Government taken to remove the obstruction in the way of passengers and sailors; and, whether, if no steps have yet been taken, the Board of Trade will immediately direct the attention of the Trinity Board to the derelict?

MR. J. BRYCE: I noticed a statement in the *Shipping Gazette* of the 15th instant, that the derelict referred to by the hon. Member had been met with on the 12th instant about 20 miles S.W. of Mizen Head. The Board were advised that the S.E. winds which have uniformly prevailed off the S.W. coast of Ireland since the derelict was met with on the 12th, would have caused her to drift away from the coast, and out of the track adopted by the Atlantic Traders. The facts are no doubt equally known to the Trinity House, and there has, therefore, been no occasion to communicate with them.

IRISH POTATOES.

MR. D. CRILLY (Mayo, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, if, as a result of the instructions given to the Royal Irish Constabulary, any reports have reached the Chief Secretary's office of the departure lately from ports in the North of Ireland, for Scottish ports, of potato-laden vessels; and, if so, have the destinations of these cargoes been definitely ascertained?

MR. J. MORLEY: Several reports have been received from the Constabulary stating that potatoes have been consigned to Scotland, and, in every case, the destination of the consignment has been ascertained. No action was called for in any of these cases, however, as it was ascertained that the potatoes, which were sent in the ordinary course of trade, were mostly for table use.

LABOUR EXCHANGES.

COLONEL HUGHES (Woolwich): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board, whether the London vestries can legally establish a Labour Exchange out of the moneys raised by them in pursuance of the Metropolitan Management Act, 1855?

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE: The Local Government Board have no jurisdiction with regard to the expenditure of the rates raised by London Vestries. As a matter of fact, a number of Vestries have established Labour Exchanges.

DISTRESS IN DONEGAL.

MR. TIMOTHY M. HEALY (Louth, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, if his attention has been called to the distress in Glengad, Innishowen, County Donegal; has inquiry been made respecting recent representations from the locality; and, will any steps be taken to relieve the sufferings of the people on this coast by the construction of the works which are pressed for?

MR. JOHN MAINS (Donegal, N.): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman, before he answers this question, whether he has had a report from the Local Government Board Inspector, who was instructed to attend the meeting of the Board of Guardians; whether he is aware that since I asked a question a week ago, about the distress in Glengad, a public meeting has been held there, and at it the people determined to apply to the public for relief, and, also, whether the right hon. Gentleman has seen a list of subscriptions for the Glengad Relief Fund, published in the *Derry Journal*, of February 15?

MR. J. MORLEY: My attention has been called to the representations made, as to the existence of distress in this locality, but upon the information at present before me, I am afraid I have nothing to add to my reply to the similar question addressed to me on the 11th instant by the hon. Member for North Donegal. I am making further inquiry in the matter, however. I understand that the Inspector did attend, and he has reported to the Local Government Board. My attention has been called to the list of subscribers.

ACCIDENTS AT DOCKS.

MR. KEIR HARDIE (West Ham, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade, whether, under the Notice of Accidents Act of last Session, stevedores who employ men direct make returns; will he explain how it is that, whereas the total number of accidents reported from docks under the Act for January was 17, in the Liverpool Docks alone there were 26 accidents, eight of them being fatal; and, whether he has power under the Act to call for a return from stevedores and other contractors as well as from Dock Companies.

MR. BRYCE: Stevedores and other contractors should report accidents which happen to their servants when employed in the construction, use, working or repair of any dock authorised by any Local or Personal Act of Parliament. Of course, the accident must be of sufficient gravity to fall within the terms of the Act. At present some accidents are reported directly by stevedores, and contractors, but the majority appear to be reported through the Dock Authorities; the hon. Member seems to be under some misapprehension as to the number of Dock Accidents reported to the Board of Trade during the month of January; 112 were reported; of these, 35 occurred to men employed in construction and repair, and 77 to those employed in the use or working of Docks; out of this total, 21 accidents were returned by the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board as happening to persons in their employment; none of these were reported as fatal. The Board of Trade have been using their best endeavours to secure that the duty of reporting accidents imposed by the Act shall become generally known to employers; and they are always glad to receive any information which may enable them to check the accuracy of the returns.

IRISH UNION ACCOUNTS.

MR. JAMES O'CONNOR (Wicklow, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether, within the last two years, any clerks of Unions in Ireland, have applied for vacant auditorships of union accounts; and whether any clerks of Unions have been promoted to the position of Auditor.

MR. J. MORLEY: During the past two years, four clerks of Unions have applied to be appointed to the position of Auditor under the Local Government Board. One vacancy only has arisen in that period, and the candidate finally selected was not one of the Gentlemen referred to.

MR. JAMES O'CONNOR asked if there was any rule against such apppointments.

MR. J. MORLEY said there was no rule whatever against it.

WATER COMPANIES AND THE FROST.

MR. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade, whether he is aware that the Water Companies, who are empowered to make their charge for supplying water to the consumers in their houses, are at present failing in many cases to carry out their contract; whether he has any power to compel the Companies to supply water direct to the consumers' houses; and, if so, will he exercise his authority, which would cause the Companies to engage a number of the unemployed to carry a supply to the householders who have to pay the water rate?

MR. J. BRYCE: I am aware of the extreme inconvenience occasioned to a very large number of householders in consequence of there being no direct supply of water to the houses by reason of the frost. But I should expect that in a large number of the cases the difficulty arises from the communication pipe or the house fittings, for which the occupiers are responsible, being frozen. But, however, this may be, the Companies, under their Acts, are expressly protected from liability in respect of a failure of direct supply by reason of frost. I have, therefore, no such power as is suggested of compelling the Companies to supply water direct to the consumers' houses.

DISTRESS AMONG THAMES WATERMEN.

MR. J. C. MACDONA (Southwark, Rotherhithe): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board, whether he is aware that, owing to the frost now prevailing for some weeks past, many barges on the rivers are frozen in the ice floes, and thus a great many bargemen, lightermen, and watermen, are thrown out of work, and much distress prevails along the riverside; and, whether the Government, in view of this state of affairs, will without delay supplement the Local Boards in these distressed localities with special grants of money, to meet the emergency of so many people being out of work?

Mr. J. BRYCE: I regret to say that there is no doubt that in consequence of the continued frost, many bargemen, lightermen, and watermen are thrown out of work, and that there is consequently a large increase in the number of persons applying to the Guardians for relief. The Government have no funds at its disposal out of which they could make such grants.

PARISH COUNCIL ACCOUNTS.

Mr. J. H. JOHNSTONE (Sussex, Horsham): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether the Board contemplate making any rules under Section 58, Sub-section (3), of The Local Government Act, 1894, with respect to the audit of the accounts of Parish Councils, and of parish meetings in parishes not having Parish Councils; and if it will be necessary for an audit to be held where no expense has been incurred by a Parish Council or by a parish meeting, or where all expenses have been deferred privately and not out of the poor rate or out of public funds; and, who is to attend the audit on behalf of a parish where there is no Parish Council.

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: The Local Government Board propose shortly to issue rules under the enactment referred to. If a Parish Council have, in fact, in their capacity of Parish Council received and expended moneys the accounts will be subject to audit, from whatever source the money has been received. The liability to attend the audit in respect of a parish where there is no Parish Council would attach to the person by whom the moneys had been received and expended on behalf of the parish?

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

Mr. J. H. C. HOZIER: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland what the Government propose to do with regard to the Disestablishment of the Church of Scotland?

Sir G. O. TREVELYAN: As there did not appear to be a prospect of the time required to pass a Government Bill for the Disestablishment of the Church of Scotland during the present Session, such a Measure was not mentioned in the Queen's Speech. Had the Government, however, seen a prospect of practical legislation on the subject, their Bill would have been framed on the lines of the Bill brought in last Session by the hon. Baronet, the Member for the College Division of Glasgow, to which the Government gave their full support.

FRANCE AND MADAGASCAR.

*Mr. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he has seen the statement of the *Dix-Neuvième Siècle* quoted in the evening papers of Friday, that Messrs. Clarkson and Company, the English firm contracting for the transport of French war material to Madagascar, are also to convey, in English vessels, French officers to carry on war with a friendly Power; and, if so, what steps the British Government intend to make to prevent this action?

*Sir E. GREY: We cannot take steps founded on unauthorised statements in the public press, but I may add that, so far as we are aware of the facts, there has not been, as we are at present advised, any breach of international law which calls for our interference.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury) asked whether it was true, as stated by an official Note published in the French Press, that the British Government had decided "not to issue a Declaration of Neutrality with reference to the conflict which had arisen between France and the Malagasy Government," and "not to interfere with the contracts concluded by certain English firms for the transport of material for the French troops," and, if so, upon what grounds of law or property; whether the Malagasy Government had always treated this country, and British interests generally, in a friendly and loyal manner, and whether the assistance to be rendered by the conveyance of French stores and combatants to the scene of the conflict would be notified beforehand by Her

Majesty's Ministers to that Government; and, whether the British Government still adhered to the statement of the hon. Gentleman in reply to a question in the House on the 7th inst., that "Her Majesty's Government will remain neutral," and if so, whether the permission accorded to British subjects to convey French stores and combatants would not after all be withdrawn?

*SIR E. GREY: Her Majesty's Government have decided that as it does not appear that there is any intention of claiming belligerent rights against neutrals on the high seas, it is not necessary to issue a Proclamation of Neutrality. The legitimate interests of British commerce afford the text by which the propriety of a Proclamation of Neutrality should, in law, be judged, and there are accordingly several occasions on which none has been issued. A neutral Government is not bound by the rules of International Law to prevent neutral ships from conveying materials for a belligerent, and it would be an extension of the duties of a neutral Government if such obligation were admitted. There can be no question of such direct permission as the hon. Member seems to contemplate being given. Her Majesty's Government intend to remain neutral, and will, therefore, observe the obligations of neutrality.

*MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) asked whether Her Majesty's subjects retained the rights they enjoyed in time of peace of supplying both France and Madagascar with warlike stores and materials, and with ships armed and equipped for war, and of having free access to the coasts and ports both of France and of Madagascar without interference either by visit or search on the high seas, or by pretended blockade or otherwise, on the part of either party to these hostilities; and, whether Her Majesty's subjects would be protected by Her Majesty's Government in the exercise of these rights?

*SIR E. GREY said this was a very complicated question, and he would ask the hon. Member to postpone it.

*MR. W. JOHNSTON: Will there be any objection on the part of Her Majesty's Government to a volunteer corps assisting the Malagasy forces?

*SIR E. GREY: If the hon. Member will give me full particulars of any such preparations, I will give him an answer.

SUPPLY OF PARCEL BASKETS TO THE POST OFFICE.

*SIR J. LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether his attention has been directed to the grave charges brought by Mr. H. C. Burdett against certain officers of the Post Office in connection with contracts for parcel baskets; and, whether he has taken any steps to ascertain the circumstances in which these charges were brought?

MR. A. MORLEY: The charges brought by Mr. Burdett were practically two. Firstly, that some of the Blind Schools could not deal with my Department because of a system there which permitted a certain amount of blackmailing on the part of certain of its officers; secondly, that I myself, or at any rate the Post Office, knew something of the matter because a case had been brought directly under notice of the Post Office Authorities. The first charge was based upon hearsay, which was found by Mr. Burdett himself—as soon as he made inquiry—to be wholly untrue; the second charge, so far as I have been able to ascertain, was not even based upon hearsay, but had no foundation whatever. I cannot refrain from expressing my surprise that a gentleman in Mr. Burdett's position should bring charges affecting the honour of the officers of a public Department upon no better authority than hearsay in one instance, and upon no discoverable ground whatever in the other.

THE CASE OF KINSELLA.

DR. J. E. KENNY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he will take into consideration the case of M. KINSELLA, now in Mountjoy Convict Prison undergoing penal servitude, to which he was sentenced in 1882 on a charge of causing the death by shooting of an intimate companion of his own, with a view to recommending His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant to liberate Kinsella.

MR. J. MORLEY: I find that the case of the convict referred to has been under the consideration of successive lords-lieutenant, and that so recently as April last it was reviewed by the present Lord Lieutenant, who satisfied himself that there were no mitigating circumstances in the case calling for a remission of the sentence. I may add, however, that the convict will be eligible, with good conduct, for release on licence in April 1897.

Mr. T. HARRINGTON (Dublin, Harbour) asked whether the attention of the right hon. Gentleman had been drawn to the fact that the Judge, in sentencing Kinsella, held out the hope that when the state of the country was more peaceable, the circumstances of the case might be re-considered?

Mr. J. MORLEY said, he had read some statement of the kind in a paper, but he was not of his own knowledge aware of it.

Mr. HARRINGTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman make inquiries?

Mr. MORLEY said that, if the fact was as stated by the hon. Member, he did not know that it would make any difference in the decision arrived at.

SEIZURE OF TRAWLERS.

Mr. J. M'LEOD (Sutherland.): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, whether he is aware that H.M.S. *Jackal* has seized during the previous week seven trawlers found trawling in prohibited Scottish waters; and, whether he will consider, in view of the services rendered by Her Majesty's ships in carrying out the Law, and as a means of further stimulating activity, the desirability of making some allowance in the shape of prize money to the crews of Her Majesty's ships engaged in policeing prohibited waters when a conviction follows seizure?

Sir G. O. TREVELYAN: Yes, I am aware that on Saturday the 9th inst. and Sunday the 10th inst. H.M.S. *Jackal* seized seven trawlers found trawling in prohibited Scottish waters; I am informed by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that they are averse to any money allowances being made to the crews of Her Majesty's ships for such services.

H.M.S. "RALEIGH."

Mr. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty why the *Raleigh*, which arrived at Devonport on the 23rd of January from the warm climate of the Cape, has not yet been paid off; whether there are over 70 men in hospital suffering from catarrh, and others at their homes suffering in the same way; and whether, if the ship, as now stated, is to be paid off on the 23rd instant, there is likely to be many men out of hospital to pay off?

Mr. EDMUND ROBERTSON: The date named in the question for paying off the ship was submitted by the Captain and was approved by the Admiralty. Certain work which has to be done on the return of a ship from foreign service is completed as soon as possible. Nothing unusual has occurred in dealing with the *Raleigh*. I think it sufficient to say, in answer to the last two paragraphs, that on Saturday the 16th, there were 10 men suffering from catarrh in hospital or at their homes out of the *Raleigh's* total complement of nearly 600 men.

THE EXECUTION OF TWISS.

Mr. T. HARRINGTON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, on the occasion of a man named Reidy being brought into Cork Gaol to identify the prisoner John Twiss and make a deposition in his presence and hearing, any intimation was conveyed to Twiss' solicitor that such a deposition would be taken, inasmuch as it was subsequently shown at the trial that on this occasion Reidy swore that on a particular day he had been at a fair in Castleisland and heard the prisoner Twiss asking another man for a revolver in order to shoot Donovan; and, in view of the fact that the Crown subsequently discovered that Reidy was not at this fair, and was ill at the Tralee Infirmary at the time, it is intended to proceed against Reidy for perjury?

Mr. J. MORLEY: A man named Reidy was brought to the Cork Prison and his deposition taken there, in presence of the prisoner. The deposition so taken was immediately forwarded to the solicitor for Twiss. The solicitor was not present when the depositions were taken, which is regrettable, but Reidy was not examined at the trial of Twiss, nor was any evidence given or offered in respect to Reidy's allegation against Twiss, which the Attorney General rejected, not upon the ground that he had been in an infirmary during the time to which the evidence applied (of which he was unaware), but because of its being, in his opinion, unworthy of belief. There is no intention of prosecuting Reidy for perjury, nor do the law officers think such a prosecution could be successful. It was to be remembered that Reidy was not called as a witness at the trial.

CHAIRMEN OF PARISH COUNCILS.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether the Chairmen of Parish Councils elected under the Local Government Act of 1894 will be compelled to retire on the 15th of April next; and if, in such case, considering the short space of time they have been in office, namely the 31st of December last, arrangements can be made for their continuance in office until 1896, so as to give them and the Councils over which they preside some opportunity of acquiring a knowledge of their new duties?

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE: The Chairmen of Parish Councils will retire on the 15th of April next, but it will, of course, be competent for a Parish Council to re-elect the same gentleman as Chairman for another year. No arrangement can be made for the continuance in office of the present chairmen, without re-election, until 1896 as suggested, except by legislation; and I cannot say that I see any sufficient reason for proposing an alteration of the law in this matter.

PAROCHIAL CHARITIES.

MR. A. C. MORTON: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he will take the necessary steps to have all parochial charities audited annually, as they are in the Metropolitan district?

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: When Charities are administered by Parish Councils or Parish Meetings, their accounts will be audited by the District Auditor in like manner as the other accounts of these Authorities. In the case of other charities the Local Government Board have no jurisdiction over them, either in the Metropolis or elsewhere.

SWINE FEVER IN IRELAND.

MR. F. A. O'KEEFFE (Limerick): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what cause has given rise to the recent stringent Order of the Privy Council, Ireland, in reference to swine fever; and, if his attention has been directed to the proceedings of the Limerick Board of Guardians on 13th inst., protesting against the enforcement of that Order in the division of Limerick?

MR. J. MORLEY: I am informed by the Veterinary Department of the Privy Council that, having regard to the prevalence of swine fever in Ireland, and to the fact that the unrestricted movement of swine to and from markets and fairs tends to spread the disease, it was considered necessary to pass an Order in Council prohibiting sales of swine in any Poor Law Union to which the recent Order of the Privy Council applied, except with a licence of the Local Authority of such Union, which may be granted under certain conditions. This Order, which has been applied to 32 Unions, came into force on the 11th inst., and Orders of a similar nature are in force in this country. Attention has been drawn to a report of the proceedings of the Limerick Guardians protesting against the enforcement of the order in that district. I am told that Limerick is one of the Unions in which swine fever has been most prevalent, and that prior to the issue of the recent Order the disease appeared to be increasing rather than diminishing. An Order of the Board of Agriculture in this country is in force enabling Local Authorities in England to prohibit the importation of swine from Ireland into their districts, and it is therefore the more incumbent on the Authorities in Ireland to take every step calculated to stamp out the disease there.

AMENDMENTS TO THE ADDRESS.

*__SIR J. LENG__: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has observed the growing tendency to anticipate, in the form of Amendments on the Address in reply to Her Majesty's Gracious Speech, special Motions ordinarily subject to the contingencies of the Ballot; and, whether, in view of the multifarious Amendments on the Address this Session, he will consider what steps can be taken to limit Amendments in future Sessions to the contents of the Speech, so that the House may earlier proceed to the despatch of business?

Sir W. HARCOURT: My hon. Friend may feel sure that I am fully alive to the inconvenience of which he speaks, but perhaps for this Session, at all events, the disorder has reached the point of convalescence. In regard to next Session, however, I should be very glad to consult with my hon. Friend as to what steps may be taken to prevent a recurrence of this unfortunate complaint.

THE IRISH "WEEKLY INDEPENDENT" AND MR. J. MORLEY.

Mr. R. M. DANE (Fermanagh, N.) asked the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention had been directed to an article in the last issue of the *Weekly Independent* newspaper, published in Dublin, headed "Murder," and, if so, what steps the Irish Government intended taking in respect of such article?

Mr. J. MORLEY: Yes, Sir. My attention has been directed to the article referred to by the hon. and learned Gentleman—an article written in relation to one of the fairest trials ever held in any part of the United Kingdom. That article undoubtedly lent itself to a sinister interpretation, but I see no reason to believe that it represents the sentiments of any considerable body of persons in Ireland, and that no useful purpose I can discover would be served by making it a subject of legal proceedings. The proper course, in my view, is to leave such language and the persons who are directly or indirectly responsible for it, or who are accessory to it, to the reprobation of all right-minded Irishmen.

UNYORO.

Mr. H. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Administrator in Uganda is now administering that portion of Unyoro which is now held by Her Majesty's Forces; what are the terms which have been submitted to the Chief of Unyoro as condition of withdrawal, and which he has declined to accept; and whether Her Majesty's Administrator is in possession of instructions as to the frontiers of the territory over which a British Protectorate has been established; and whether, if so, they include any portion of Unyoro.

*Sir E. GREY: Information on the first two points will be found in the Papers relating to Uganda, which have been promised, but I may say generally that Unyoro is not being administered by the British Commissioner in Uganda, that the Chief of Unyoro was not asked to withdraw at all, and that the operations undertaken there have been to prevent raids upon Uganda. Instructions on the last point of the question were sent and are in the Commissioners possession; the frontiers of the Protectorate do not include any portion of Unyoro.

INSANITY.

Dr. J. E. KENNY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, would he furnish, for the information of the House, any information he may have obtained during the Recess, through the Foreign Office, on the subject of the general increase of insanity in other countries?

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. H. H. Asquith, Fife, E.): The information is not now in a form in which it could usefully be laid before Parliament, but if the hon. Gentleman would like to look in at the Home Office any time, the Reports shall be produced for his inspection.

IRISH SHERIFFS.

Mr. J. ROSS (Londonderry): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, is he aware that from the year 1871 Sheriffs in Ireland were paid their expenses incurred in the administration of the Jury Acts by Grand Jury Presentment, under the 16th Section of the Juries Act (Ireland) 1871; that it has lately been decided that as Sheriffs are not expressly named in the Section that it does not apply, and that there is no legal method of reimbursing them for the necessary outlay in the administration of the Acts; and, whether he would have any objection to a Bill to include Sheriffs among the persons referred to in Section 16 of the Juries Act (Ireland) 1871?

Mr. J. MORLEY: Since 1871, Sheriffs were paid the expenses referred to in the question under the Section mentioned. The Court of Appeal has decided that these payments were without legal warrant. Sheriffs receive a salary under the Grand Jury Acts in respect of expenses incurred by them. No doubt Sheriffs ought to be indemnified for any expenses incurred by them, which the salary received does not meet. Before any legislation is attempted it will be necessary to ascertain whether, and if so, to what extent, the salary which is given to meet such expense is inadequate, so that Sheriffs may not be paid twice over for the same work by the County.

TREATIES RESPECTING AFRICA.

Mr. H. LABOUCHERE: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whether any treaties or agreements have been entered into by Her Majesty's Government, in connection with Africa, with any European Power, beyond those which are in the cognisance of this House?

*Sir E. GREY: No such treaties exist, and there is only one agreement of no great importance, which will be presented almost immediately.

THE SLAVE TRADE IN ZANZIBAR.

*Sir C. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whether there have been established within the Protectorate of Zanzibar both the International Bureau named in Article 27 of the Brussels Act, and also any of the offices and institutions named in Article 86; and, whether the office expenses of the office at Zanzibar are being shared by all the signatory Powers, and recovered through the agency of the Department of the Foreign Office at Brussels, as provided by Article 85?

*Sir E. GREY: The International Bureau has been established and is in full operation. The only place in the Zanzibar Protectorate where an office did not already exist was Pemba, and a post is now being established there. The answer to the last paragraph is in the affirmative.

ADULTERATION OF YARN.

Mr. LEES KNOWLES (Salford, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been called to the injuries to health resulting from the practice of "noddling" or adulteration of yarn with lead products for the purpose of increasing its weight; if this practice was covered by the inquiry of the Lead Industries Department Committee; and if any special rules applicable to it have been framed under Section 8 of the Factory Act, 1891?

*Mr. ASQUITH: I am informed that the practice of "noddling" consists in stretching hanks of yarn on pegs, and then combing the rough portions, previous to their being twisted, pressed, and packed; and that, in "noddling" yarn which has been dyed a yellow or orange colour, and which has been passed through a mixture of acetate of lead and bichromate of potash, (not for the purpose of adding to its weight but in order to produce those colours), a good deal of fibre and lead dust is given off, with consequent risk of injury to health of the women and girls employed. Dye-works were not included in the reference to the Departmental Committee on White Lead Industries, but by my direction special inquiries are being made by the Inspectors of Factories throughout the United Kingdom as to what manufacturing processes in the various trades are dangerous to the health of the workpeople, with a view to the issue of special rules when necessary, and amongst others, the process referred to in the question has been noted for special attention.

BOYCOTTING.

Mr. J. ROSS: I beg to ask the the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1) whether he is aware that Hugh Moore, of Lisnafund, near Virginia, County Cavan, who took a farm from which a former tenant had been evicted for non-payment of rent has been and is boycotted, and has been prevented from selling his horses by disorderly crowds who follow him about blowing horns in fairs and markets; that on 2nd of February while drawing hay to his farm he was attacked by a large crowd and violently assaulted, and his cart overturned; that on several occasions horn-blowing crowds assembled about his house, and that Moore's sister is also boycotted, and that the mill hands in the neighbourhood have refused to scutch her flax or grind her oats; and that boycotting notices have appeared lately in the *Drogheda Independent* referring to this case; and (2) has any person been made amenable?

MR. J. MORLEY: I am aware that Moore has been subjected to much annoyance for the reason stated in the question. On the 24th January he brought a horse to Virginia Fair, not, as I am advised, for the purpose of selling it, but in order to see if the people would interfere with him. He was shouted at by a large crowd, which, however, dispersed on being cautioned by the police. With regard to the occurrences of the 2nd instant, the Government have given directions for the prosecution of the ringleaders on this occasion, and the proceedings will be instituted at the earliest Petty Sessions. The statements at the end of the first paragraph of the question are, I am informed, correct.

TYPEWRITERS FOR THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

MR. T. B. CURRAN (Kilkenny): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works when it is to be expected that typewriters will be provided as recommended by the Committee appointed last year to consider the accommodation of the House of Commons?

MR. H. J. GLADSTONE: I am now considering the arrangements for the provision of typewriters at the House, and expect to announce the result within a few days.

THE COLLOONEY AND CLAREMORRIS RAILWAY.

MR. J. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury what is the reason why the landowners have not yet been paid compensation awarded to them for land taken for the Collooney and Claremorris Railway?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): In a number of cases the compensation has been fixed by mutual agreement with the landowners, and they have already been paid. In the other cases where an agreement has not been come to, it is necessary to await the Arbitrator's final award, which is expected to be published within 14 days.

FARMERS AND INCOME TAX.

MR. G. B. HUDSON (Herts, Hitchin): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what was the amount of the Income Tax charged for the year ending 5th April, 1894, in England and Wales under Schedule B; (2) what was the amount actually collected, and what amount was remitted; and (3) if the total amount received was very small, would he make an alteration so that the Assessment shall in future be made under Schedule D only, and thus save the collectors much trouble in making out the demand notes?

MR. R. L. EVERETT (Suffolk, Woodbridge) asked whether, if that suggestion were adopted, farmers would not lose to some extent the benefits conferred upon them by the changes made in the Budget of last year in respect of Schedule B.

*SIR W. HARCOURT: The charge to Duty, under Schedule B of the Income Tax Acts in England and Wales, for the year ended March 31, 1894, was £242,700. The second part of the question cannot be answered, as the accounts for the year are not yet completely closed. Farmers have for some time had the option of being assessed to Income Tax, according to the Rules of Schedule D, but only a very small number have adopted that course, no doubt for the reason alluded to by my hon. Friend behind me—because, in fact, they found that they would be at a disadvantage if they came under Schedule D. I very much doubt whether the compulsory application of Schedule D to farmers would be at all acceptable to the agricultural community. I may remind the hon. Member that English farmers having no other source of income than their farming profits are now completely exempt, when their rent does not exceed £487 10s.

GALWAY HARBOUR AND THE ATLANTIC TRADE.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if his attention has been drawn to the statements of the Chairman of the Midland and Western Company, that the report of a skilled engineer estimates that Galway Harbour could be made fit for a great Transatlantic packet station for £670,000, and that the Midland and

Western Railway Company are prepared to do its share when the Government are induced to take up this project; and, if the Government wlll commence to form a great harbour at Galway, using either free or convict labour for this purpose?

Sir W. HARCOURT: This is a matter which has not come under my consideration; and, of course, I am not able to give my hon. and gallant Friend an answer upon it.

THE UGANDA RAILWAY.

Mr. H. LABOUCHERE: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether it is in contemplation to ask this House to vote any money, or to consent to any borrowing of money, in connection with a railway between Uganda and the coast, during the present Session?

Sir W. HARCOURT: No, Sir. It is not contemplated in the present Estimates to ask for any money for the purpose mentioned. As to the future, nothing can be said in the present state of the relations between the Government and the company.

POOR LAW GUARDIANS AND THE UNEMPLOYED.

Mr. P. G. H. CARVILL (Newry): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board, whether Boards of Guardians in England have power, under 59 Geo. III. c. 12, and subsequent Acts, to hire or purchase land on which to employ unemployed poor persons under regulations to be made by the Local Government Board; and, if so, whether he has had his attention called to a request made by the Croydon Board of Guardians for such regulations to be made, and whether any other boards have made similar requests; if the Local Government Board has made or intends to make such regulations or rules; and, what is being done to enable Guardians in England to use these powers where they wish to do so.

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: As the hon. Member is no doubt aware the powers referred to have not been exercised for a long period of years, and although they are still on the Statute Book have been regarded as obsolete. The Croydon Board of Guardians have, however, been informed that if they submit to the Local Government Board any scheme which they desire to propose for the acquiring of land as suggested, and inform the Board fully of the details of the arrangements which they contemplate in connection with their scheme, the Board will give the proposal of the Guardians their careful consideration. I am not aware that any other similar request has been made by a Board of Guardians.

GRANTS TO ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS.

Colonel NOLAN: I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, if he can state roughly how much per child is paid on an average from the State to those primary schools in which the teachers and most of the children are Roman Catholics; and, whether these payments are made directly or through the intermediary of school boards.

Mr. A. H. D. ACLAND: According to the latest available returns, the average grant per child, including the drawing grant, made by the State to Roman Catholic elementary schools, in which it is to be presumed that, as a rule, both the teachers and most of the children are Roman Catholics, is £1. 8s. 5½d. The payments are made directly to the managers of the schools and not through School Boards.

HYPNOTISM.

Sir D. H. MACFARLANE (Argyll) asked the Secretary of State to the Home Department whether his attention had been called to the public exhibition of hypnotism at the Royal Aquarium, where men and women were kept in a state of suspended animation, which, in the opinion of medical authorities, was attended with considerable risk to life?

Mr. ASQUITH: No, Sir; my attention has not been called to it.

Sir D. H. MACFARLANE: Will the right hon. Gentleman now direct his attention to it?

Mr. ASQUITH: Yes.

SEED POTATOES SUPPLY (IRELAND) BILL.

Mr. J. MORLEY, in asking leave to bring in a Bill to provide for the Supply of Seed Potatoes to Occupiers and Cultivators of Land in Ireland, said: Only one sentence will be necessary in asking the House to give me leave to introduce this Bill. I explained the other evening the general objects on which I am engaged to meet the distress in Ireland. I need only say now that this Bill is a copy of the Bill of 1890 introduced by the right hon. Gentleman opposite, with the comparatively unimportant alteration that we do not give power to enable the Local Government Board to carry the Act into execution in cases where Guardians make default, or do not choose to apply for a loan. We propose to insert two clauses, one of which will have the effect of providing for the repayment of loans made before the Bill becomes law, and the other for validating proceedings taken before that time.

Mr. T. SEXTON asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would have any objection to amend the title of the Bill so as to make it apply not only to seed, but to oats, &c., and also whether he adhered to the period of two years for repayment.

Mr. J. MORLEY: I propose to retain the period of two years. On the Second Reading I shall be able to give my hon. Friend an answer to the argument he used the other night, and to tell him the views of the Government upon his proposal. I feel great difficulty in changing the title of the Bill, because the experience gained on former occasions shows that the objections to widening the scope of Bills of this character are found to be very serious. Therefore, I do not think it would be wise to make any alteration in the title of the Bill.

Mr. G. C. T. BARTLEY rose.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order! It is not in order to make speeches at this stage.

Mr. BARTLEY: I only wish to say a word.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. BARTLEY: Am I right in objecting to the Bill being gone on with?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Under the Standing Order no objection can, I think, be taken to a Bill at this stage?

Leave given.

Bill brought in and read 1°.

The Twelve o' Clock Rule.

Sir W. HARCOURT moved, That the Proceedings on the Queen's Speech (Motion for Address), if under discussion at Twelve o'clock that night, be not interrupted under the Standing Order, Sittings of the House.

Motion agreed to.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

ADJOURNED DEBATE ON THE ADDRESS.

[Order read for adjourned Debate on Address in reply to Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech. 5th February, see page 15.]

Debate resumed on Amendment moved 15th February, by Mr. J. Chamberlain (Birmingham, W.)

*Mr. L. H. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin) said, that at this season of the year and in the present weather, it was very imprudent to make any engagement, and if he had thought on Friday night, when he moved the Adjournment of the Debate, that his voice would be in the condition in which it then was he would not have ventured to obtain possession of the House. He was aware that the experience must be as disagreeable to hon. Members, as it was unwelcome to himself, but he was quite confident that he would receive from them all courtesy and consideration. The Home Secretary said, that the Opposition were guilty of making various inconsistent attacks upon the Government. He thought that objection was one purely of form, and that underneath the three principal Amendments to which the right hon. Gentleman referred there lay the same principle. They were founded upon the same valuation of the public situation. The opinion which animated the Movers of every one was, simply, that the Government had exhausted their authority; that their moral influence had suffered grievous disaster; and that, if they wished to regain their strength they ought to go to the country before proceeding further. If they persisted in going on the Government should confine themselves to what the Home Secretary called humdrum Legislation, by which they understood him to mean useful Legislation, which would be favoured by the Nation, but which did not admit of brilliant exploits of rhetoric or great strokes of tactics. If the Government would not do that they should go to the country upon the one issue of

Home Rule. They were formed as a Government upon that question, and although they had endeavoured to receive strength by the addition to it of other questions, it was their one title to public consideration. If the Government, as a body, had that question at heart in the way in which he believed some of their Members had, they would long since have endeavoured to get strength to carry this primary object further by appealing to the constituencies, whatever the result might be. But as the Government would neither go to the country nor confine themselves to humdrum Legislation, the Opposition protested that they should not degrade Parliament, and do little honour to themselves by putting before the House a programme of Legislation which they themselves, did not regard as practical, while at the same time they were keeping in the background a great constitutional movement, upon which they would not take Parliament into their confidence. He did not believe this opinion was confined to the opposition. In the solitary, or all but solitary supporter the Government had yet had, it had found expression. The hon. Member for Northampton had compared himself to a certain most patient and long-suffering beast, but even that animal could at times find a miraculous voice. The hon. Member had a great notion of Party fidelity and a high standard of respect for his official leaders. But it led him to this remarkable conclusion, that although he would not express by vote the opinion that the Government had better go to the country at once, yet he had no objection in doing so by voice. In other words, the hon. Member abstained from giving a formal and practical confirmation of his opinion out of the great respect he had for Her Majesty's Ministers. He believed that the hon. Member could not be alone among the followers of his Party in the estimate he held of the present situation. No doubt some other supporters, more or less devoted to the Government, would speak in the course of the Debate, and it was possible some of them would take a stand similar to that taken by the hon. Member for Northampton, and, shew that while unwilling to put the Government in a minority, they would be only too pleased if it would act upon the suggestions made in the course of the Debate, and take the earliest opportunity of getting a fresh lease of life from the constituencies, if the constituencies felt disposed to give it. He was also inclined to think that hon. Members from Ireland, who cherished a profound feeling of gratitude for Her Majesty's Government, and who would not do anything to embarrass their policy, must in their own minds admit that if their cause was to be a prosperous one it would not be secured by a course of manœuvring legislation here, but by a frank discussion of the question before the country. He did not wish to go into ancient history or to trace the origin of the Government policy, but he thought they could carry it back very clearly to that famous document known as the Newcastle Programme. The persons who framed and the persons who accepted that document seemed to have forgotten one truth of our Parliamentary experience, namely, that if any great change in legislation was desired, it was necessary to pursue it as one object, which should be made the paramount object, and nothing should be allowed to embarrass its progress or interfere with its success. He did not care what they might look back upon—whether it was Free Trade, Representative Reform, or the Disestablishment of a Church—the one object which the Ministry had taken up and pursued had been made, if not the exclusive, at all events the paramount object of their labours; and, if defeated, they had allowed nothing to interfere with it, and, if they were checked in their progress towards its success, they had not gone aside to take up other subjects, but had recurred to it in a way which promised them the quickest means to their end. They had clung to it in a spirit of determined, resolute, and unwavering ardour. If they wanted supremely to achieve any object they must pursue the campaign in the spirit which Mr. Lowell, when he contemplated the historic struggle in his own country, described as pig-headed fighting. And that was the only way to succeed. They must be pig-headed. The Government, however, had not got the gift of pigheadedness, and they never had it. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian no doubt took up the Home Rule question with the conviction that it was the supreme object to pursue. His right hon. Friend, the Chief Secretary, shared that conviction. But how many of their colleagues shared it? He was inclined to think that if it had been shared generally by the Party and the Ministry they would never have allowed the Newcastle Programme to come in—apparently as a method of helping, but really as a means of enfeebling their policy. The test of their feeling was found when the Bill of 1893 was rejected. If they had believed in that Bill, and if they had believed that the country was behind them, the course pursued would have been a very different one. Why did they not achieve success and pursue the path open to them? In the first place, the Bill itself was the answer to such a question. Not even the most devoted adherent of the Government could have believed that that was a Bill with which they could go to the country. The Home Secretary said on Friday night that it was a great thing to have a Bill passed through the House of Commons, but he would put it to this test. Would the right hon. Gentleman have gone to the country more gladly and with a lighter heart after that Bill had gone through the House of Commons or before it was brought in? It had passed through the House, and what should have been the effect upon the mind of the Nation? If it had been a Bill embodying some good and sound working plan, it would, indeed, have added to the strength of the Party and have given them power; but not such a Bill as this one, which, it was confessed, would not have been pressed into law if left entirely to the House, because many of the supporters of the Government would then have shrunk from it. He ventured to say that if the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary proposed to advance the question of Welsh Disestablishment by getting a Bill through the House of Commons, he would have to frame it in a somewhat different fashion and upon some different principles to the one which was laid on the table last year; nor did it seem that that policy would be promoted by a proposal that the revenues and assets of the Church were to be wasted in an arbitrary and local way with a *minimum* of public advantage and a *maximum* of waste. If the Government had had the real feeling he had described towards the question of Home Rule they would have gone to the country when that Bill was rejected. But why did they not do so? It was, perhaps, worth while to refer to the subject, since the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian had seen fit to defend the refusal of the Government to dissolve on the ground that he would not allow the Lords to dictate to him. That was not the question. The Lords could not force a Dissolution, but why did not the Prime Minister have recourse to it? It rested with the Prime Minister, under the Sovereign, to decide when an appeal should be made to the country, but when the Lords rejected the Home Rule Bill the Government refused to go to the country. Suppose when the Corn Law Repeal Bill passed through that House the Lords had rejected it in their indiscretion, what would Sir R. Peel have done? Would he have acquiesced? No. He could not have sat down under its rejection. They knew, indeed, that some Lords abstained from taking action because they believed that Sir Robert Peel would dissolve Parliament if the Bill were rejected, and so bring absolute ruin to the Whigs. Cobden, in a letter to his wife, refers to the belief that Sir Robert Peel would dissolve Parliament if the Bill were rejected." It was the Bill which surpassed everything else, although Sir Robert Peel had other very important Bills in hand; and if the Home Rule Bill were to be regarded as a Bill of the same stamp—a Bill necessary to the well-being of the nation—they should have had a Dissolution immediately after its rejection in 1893. There was, however, wanting then, as there was wanting now, any such fixed, steady, determined support on the part of the nation for Home Rule. How could they, in the face of recent experience, speak of the nation as having settled into a determination to have Home Rule? How could they speak of high resolve to that end, which had remained unbroken, and was still fixed and unalterable? All this was wanting, and the Lords were justified in the rejection of the Bill by the circumstances of the time. They had been, indeed, expressly justified by Lord Rosebery himself; and any Second Chamber in the world would be justified in rejecting such a Bill and sending it back for further deliberation and consideration on the ground that the country was not possessed by a dominant feeling in favour of the object. The Peers declared the nation was not in favour of the Bill, and so sent it back. The Bill differed essentially from the principles which the Member for Midlothian had himself laid down, and on that ground also the Lords were justified in sending it back; and under similar circumstances the House of Lords would be bound again to do the same thing. But what does that involve? The Government had in 1893 a majority which just enabled them to send the Bill to the other House. The other House then was the obstacle to the Bill becoming law, and they had not the power to overcome that obstacle. That was the situation. A casual, fluctuating majority—a feeble, uncertain majority. The proper course was to appeal to the country to give the Government a larger majority with which to remove the obstacle. What was the decision of the Government? They thought they might get a similar majority on another occasion, though the Chief Secretary as good as stated that an effective majority would not be got now, but that it might be got at some future time. The problem was how to remove the obstacle at the other end of the Palace, supposing a similar majority obtained again. What, had to be done in such a case? The Government saw that they had not got a nation behind them, and they hoped to break down the obstacle by other tactics. They fell back on a Resolution, but everyone who believed in the sovereignty of the people must fight resolutely against the suggestion that the House of Commons should arrogate to itself the power to declare, through a chance majority, what was the mind of the nation. The device to get out of the difficulty by a Resolution was compared by the Member for West Birmingham, on Friday, with the action of Lord Melbourne's Government in its last days, and the Home Secretary accepted the comparison. But let them understand the weight of the comparison. Lord Macaulay, it seems, said of that Government, "they had excellent cards if they knew how to use them." And the historian of the life of Cobden adds—

> "Unluckily for themselves they did not know how to use them, and everybody was quite aware that their conversion towards Free Trade was not the result of conviction, but was the last device of a foundering Party."

And again—

> "No friends were raised up. No great body was conciliated, nor attracted, nor even touched with friendly interest; and the chief reason for this stubborn apathy——"

how like it was to-day!

> —"was, as Sir Robert Peel said, that nobody believed the proposals of Ministers sprang from their spontaneous will, or that they had been adopted in consequence of the deliberate convictions of those who brought them forward. The conversion was too rapid. . . . and the motives of so speedy a change were too plain."

This is the parallel which the Home Secretary accepted, but he consoled himself with saying, "In five years the Corn Laws were abolished." Yes, but they were not dealt with by the Ministers who resorted to that action, nor after their method. [*Ironical cheers and counter cheers.*] He was glad he had pleased all parties. The change that then happened supplied no parallel, for it was due to a great national calamity. He did not say the Corn Laws would not have been abolished before now, but the repeal of those Laws in 1846 followed the Irish famine in 1845. Looking forward to the future, and contemplating large changes in the Constitution of the House of Lords, he thoroughly believed the whole movement of political opinion and political thought in our time was against any popular Chamber, however representative, assuming the power of declaring that it was the nation. The action proposed by the Government tended in the direction of assuming for the House of Commons the uncontrolled and uncontrollable power of saying: "We speak with the voice of the nation, and we insist upon having our mandates accepted." In the freest and most democratic countries the tendency was not to destroy the Second Chamber, but to make it a strong component element with the First, so that the two together might represent the mandate of the nation, neither one nor the other being trusted by itself. Some means of overcoming a deadlock may be found, but not by the abolition of the power of either House. He regretted that the President of the Board of Trade was not in his place. On Friday night the right hon. Member for West Birmingham quoted from his work on "The American Commonwealth," that the "belated philosophers of England" were coming to the conclusion that the House of Lords needed to be strengthened, and not weakened. The President of the Board of Trade was a little "belated" in this matter. It might not be known to every Member of the House, but three or four years ago a series of manuals for the political education of the people was advertised, including one which had never seen the light: "The House of Lords. By the Right Hon. James Bryce, M.P." The work was a little belated, or they might now have had the advantage of getting from it the mature and settled convictions of the right hon. Gentleman upon the subject. What was the *Referendum* in Switzerland? Was it not a confession by the people that the Federal Assembly could not be trusted to represent the national mind, and had it not happened over and over again that laws passed by considerable majorities in the Swiss Legislature had been rejected afterwards by the people? In America the popular vote had rejected over and over again what the most freely elected representative conventions had agreed upon. The authority of a single body to represent a community was thus shown to be unfounded. In Australia, with regard to Australasian Federation, there had been a growing inclination not to be content with the conclusions of elected representative Chambers, but to look also to the popular vote. Whatever changes were in store with regard to the House of Lords, he was sure they would not be in the direction suggested by the Government, but in that of strengthening an Assembly that was now too weak. On this question he felt commiseration for the Prime Minister. Our Constitution was defective in not allowing Ministers to sit in both Houses of Parliament, and to speak in each Assembly. He ventured to express this opinion during the Debates on the Home Rule Bill. [Sir C. DILKE: "Hear, hear!"] The right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean agreed with him, but did not then give him the benefit of his support. He regretted that Lord Rosebery could not sit in the House of Commons as well as in the House of Lords. If he could have sat there they would have been spared the exaggerated estimates that were formed of him some time ago, and the exaggerated depression which now attached to his reputation. They would have known more accurately how to measure his strength and power. Lord Rosebery would probably have learnt something by being amongst them. At present it must be confessed that the Prime Minister was in peril. He was, perhaps in the greatest peril that a public man could be in—that of appearing a little bit ridiculous. The Prime Minister had been compared by one of his supporters to a clown in a circus, and they could not help feeling that there was some ground for the comparison. The Prime Minister threw down a challenge. The challenge was promptly taken up, whereupon the Prime Minister said: "We will talk about it another day." It was very unfortunate they should be in such a position of uncertainty, both as to the present action of the Government with regard to the House of Lords, and their future policy towards it. Lord Rosebery had told them his views with respect to the House of Peers in the past. He looked back to the time when the House of Lords was not separated from the House of Commons by great diversity of opinion. It was slower, more hesitating in its action, but there was not continual opposition between the two Houses. Lord Rosebery seemed content with the relations between the two Houses in the past, and would like to see them revived like what they were 30 years ago. That, he believed, was the only object of Lord Rosebery's desires. Lord Rosebery himself had said as much. That was all that Lord Rosebery said he desired, but, unfortunately, he had not the power to be able to adhere to his own desires; and so, instead of this modest proposal, which might with less difficulty become a practical proposal, he had been persuaded that it would be possible for the House of Commons to assert and to claim in respect of the House of Lords the same exclusive authority over Legislation that it had at present over Finance; that, starting with some Resolution which was not explained, it would be possible for the House of Commons to obtain an exclusive authority over Legislation, so that, with regard to any particular project of Legislation, it might say that these were its demands which the Lords must obey, notwithstanding any objections they might entertain. Whoever thought of getting a great constitutional change made in this way had neglected, in the first place, to consider the conditions which made such a claim of authority in respect to Finance to be possible and practicable; and he also forgot that trend of opinion which was so antagonistic to the claims of a Single Assembly. But Lord Rosebery, having thrown down his gauntlet, having declared that a great Constitutional change was imminent, and having refrained from defining it, had allowed matters to drift. In these circumstances, they might conceive thatthis would possibly happen :—at the end of a long Session, just before their labours came to a close, they might have a Resolution brought in, quickly debated, and possibly affirmed, and then the decision on that carried to the constituencies, from which it was hoped to obtain some verdict which would endorse and enforce the conclusion already affirmed. In fact, though Lord Rosebery did not desire it, but shrank from it, and declared he would not himself be content with a Single Chamber, he was allowing the question of a Single and a Double Chamber to drift, so that it might pass from the consideration of authority, from the deliberations of statesmen in either or both Houses, and might have to be decided in the dust of the streets and the tumult of the hustings. He felt that Lord Rosebery was in a false position in allowing matters to drift on, to refer the determination of this great Constitutional question to the cries of public meetings and to agitation, void of deliberation, and of a violent and Party character. The *referendum* with respect to each particular thing, and a *referendum* the answer to which was to settle everything, were two totally different proposals, and Lord Rosebery was allowing matters to slide. But he was not so much disturbed with that prospect—hateful as he confessed it was to think that a question of this grave importance and high character should be proposed to be settled by such means. He was not, however, disturbed by it, because he had a profound conviction that the people of this country would not ratify any such plan, and that the nation would shrink from endowing either House with unrestricted authority. But on this account they claimed that at this stage of the Session they should be told distinctly what the Government proposed to do. Although he did not expect a national disaster from postponement, he did recognise in it a danger and a degradation to this House and to this Parliament. It was unbefitting to the Government, it was unbefitting to them, that a question of this magnitude should be treated in this fashion. At all events, let them come to close quarters. Let them have a clear declaration of what the Government wanted to do; let them understand it, and fight it out there. When they had discussed it, and turned it over and over again, under the light of experience and with such reasoning as they could bring to bear on the question, they might at length come to a conclusion, and then go to the country and see what the country would say. He did not shrink or quail from the result. He did not make his protest because he wanted to shelve the Government Bills. He had no invincible hostility to the Irish Land Bill, the Welsh Disestablishment Bill, Local Veto Bill, or other minor measures of the Government like the one for the Unification of London, but he did protest against their being put between them and this great Constitutional issue which the Prime Minister had declared was to be raised, but from which the Government appeared to shrink. He denounced the reticence of the Government, and with his friends claimed an open discussion. Do not let the Government go on fumbling and stumbling with minor Legislation, which, would come to naught. Let the Government give them a free expression of their judgment, let them have an opportunity of debating it, and then they would go to the country and see what the country would say. He should be very much surprised if they should get any verdict which would approve of the claim that that Assembly should be the uncontrolled mistress of the destinies of the Empire. He claimed that the Government ought to tell them now, at the commencement of the Session, what they desired to do in this matter, and he strongly supported the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, which called upon them to make that declaration.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.) said, his right hon. Friend, in supporting the Amendment, spoke mainly on two subjects. He first of all enforced his opinion that an immediate Dissolution of Parliament should take place, and this, in face of the fact that the Mover of the Amendment (the right hon. Member for West Birmingham), who ought to be the highest authority on the subject, declared that he had no wish whatever to force an immediate Dissolution. But his right hon. Friend was in favour of Dissolution on the subject of Home Rule, and although perhaps not altogether from the same motive as the hon. Member for Waterford, it was evident that it was rather to that particular Amendment than to this one that that portion of his speech was addressed. And then, his right hon. Friend, having practically discussed an Amendment which had been disposed of, proceeded to discuss further a Resolution which was not before the House. The latter part of his speech was made on the apparent supposition that this Amendment had already been carried, and they were at this moment discussing the celebrated Resolution that had been promised upon the relations between the two Houses of Parliament. His right hon. Friend stated very clearly his view upon the subject, saying that he would strengthen the House of Lords, that the idea of a popular Chamber uncontrolled was one from which the general feeling of the country was turning away, and therefore he posed before the House as an advocate for a strong House of Lords keeping in wholesome check the popular Assembly. The right hon. Gentleman, in an earlier part of his speech, complained that it was a misfortune that a book which had been promised by Mr. Bryce—as he then was –upon the House of Lords, three or four years ago, had never been published, in order that they might compare the opinions of that distinguished authority now with the opinions which he held two or three years ago. That might be a great loss to this Assembly in coming to a conclusion in the matter. He could, however, supply the right hon. Member for Bodmin with the void in his case, not by any reference to the book, but by a reference to another authoritative expression of his right hon. Friend himself. The House would bear in mind that the right hon. Member for Bodmin had talked solely of strengthening the House of Lords. What were until recently the opinions of his right hon. Friend on this subject of the relations between the two Houses of Parliament? He said—

> "I confess my experience of the present House of Commons, as well as of the last, leads me to think a Second Chamber might have its uses in moderating the action of a First Chamber issuing directly from popular suffrages and representing in an exaggerated form the predominant feeling at the time of an election; but the House of Lords does not supply this use. It has two capital defects. First, it offers no check to the extravagances of a party majority calling itself Conservative, and, next, its vote is, in appearance at least, absolute instead of suspensory. Perhaps we may feel our way in time to a House that shall, if somewhat slow, exhibit the attributes of a real Senate in maintaining its self-command in the midst of excitement and in subjecting to the criticism of common sense whatever comes before it from any quarter. But it will be necessary, before this can be realised, that the Upper House shall be reinforced by representatives of classes now practically unrepresented in it, and that the power of this Assembly should be restricted to a temporary or suspensory veto."

They had not heard a word that night from his right hon. Friend of the temporary or suspensory veto.

*MR. COURTNEY: My right hon. Friend will pardon me. I spoke of a means of relieving difficulties that might arise.

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN As a means of relief! It was a question of veto. What the veto was to be was really one of the main questions that were supposed to be involved in this matter. It was at least odd that his right hon. Friend should have omitted all reference to that. He had listened as a plain person to the remonstrances he addressed to them. There was only one piece of advice he gave them which he felt disposed to adopt. He said they would find it greatly to their advantage if they were pig-headed. They meant to resist the very transparent friendly advice which the right hon. Gentleman and that Amendment offered to them. Now, although he was not disposed to be too severe a Party critic of the Opposition, he could not compliment them upon their tactics or congratulate them upon the success of their tactics in the opening days of that Session. They had already had three Amendments to the Address. They had the Amendment moved by the hon. Member for Hampshire (Mr. Jeffreys), which had especial importance, because the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. A. J. Balfour) frankly told them he had had a voice in constructing it. If so, it reflected very little credit upon the ingenuity and astuteness of the Leader of the Opposition, because his object had been to capture a majority from the ranks of those opposed to him. That was rather a shy and difficult fish to catch. The way they had set to work was, that they loaded their hook with two or three different kinds of bait, a resource which, he was sure, no expert angler would adopt, because he would know that the result would be what exactly did occur—namely, that instead of attracting the fish it would scare it. Then, to come to the Amendment of the hon. and learned Member for Waterford (Mr. J. E. Redmond), that was an Amendment which, if it had any meaning at all, meant Home Rule and nothing less than Home Rule, and Home Rule at once, and a Dissolution as the readiest road to Home Rule. They could not accept it—many hon. Members below the Gangway opposite would not accept it—because they did not believe that it was to the interest of Home Rule; yet the right hon. Gentleman with all his followers, except those who were not blinded by prejudice—and there were a few—marched into the Lobby with the nine Members who composed the Party of the hon. Member for Waterford. Lastly, they had that Amendment. It was announced with some degree of circumstance on the first evening of the Session. The first evening of the Session was, he might use the phrase, rather flat. The right hon. Gentleman did not pitch his address in a very high key, but in concluding he said, with an air of weighty importance, some Member of authority would shortly move an Amendment. They waited for several days until the Amendment was adumbrated, fabricated, and polished; and when the Member of authority was disclosed, and the Amendment was tabled, they discovered that it was such an Amendment as to equal in its surprising character any Amendment that ever had been placed upon the Table of the House. What was the nature of the Amendment? The hon. and learned Member for the Isle of Wight (Sir R. E. Webster) made on Friday a long and most able speech, in which he made the best possible case for his side, but which he regretted to say—such was the general indifference as to the proceedings which occupied their time, and which were rather of the nature of a performance than of a Debate, greatly as he was respected and admired in the House—was not listened to by more than a score or 25 Members of his own side. He said one thing in the course of his speech which was to be admired. He said: "Both I and my hon. Friend the Home Secretary desire to avoid cant as much as possible." He should have liked it better if he had left out "as much as possible." It occurred to him as the words fell from the hon. and learned Gentleman that the Amendment before the House was itself the very embodiment of cant. Having drawn that conclusion at the time, he referred to a standard dictionary to see what cant really meant, and he found cant defined as an empty, solemn speech, implying what is not felt. He should like to know where could be found a more apt description of that Amendment—for what did it say? The Amendment called upon them not to waste their time upon Bills which would not pass. Did it stop there? No. The mere statement of fact that Bills would not pass might have provoked the further question: "How did they know that they would not pass?"—and that would have implied an assumption on the part of the supporters of the Amendment that they arrogated to themselves a knowledge of, and a power over, the proceedings of the House of Lords which it would be hardly decent for them to claim. Therefore they dared not, in fact, say here what was said very freely in the country—that the great guardian of the liberties of the subject and of the Constitution, and of every other good thing except the majority of the Representatives of the people, was to be found in the House of Lords, and that the House of Lords might be trusted to prevent the Representatives of the people there from having their own way. It would not do to say that in the House of Commons. So it was necessary to dig out from the copious oratory of the Recess certain casual phrases—["Oh, oh!"]—yes, certain phrases—if they did not like the word "casual" he would withdraw it—implying that there was difficulty, amounting almost to impossibility, of carrying Liberal measures through the House of Lords—[Sir R. E. WEBSTER: "The House of Commons"]—no, the House of Lords—except such measures as the hon. and learned Gentleman and his friends, by their peculiar mode of conducting Debates, might allow to go through. Then they treated those phrases as literally conclusive, and expressive of the formal decision of the Government. They founded a proposal which, if accepted, might defeat the Government, would upset the course of the Session, might possibly plunge the country into a General Election upon phrases which might have a considerable force of truth in them, but still which did not by themselves constitute anything like a declared policy or a declared opinion of the Government. It was the commonest and most favourite Party weapon in that House to pick up a phrase that had been used and fling it at one's adversary. It was a very fair method of political controversy, and it was most effective. It never was employed with greater brilliancy and more crushing effect than on Friday night by the Home Secretary. But, although, as he said, that was fair fighting, he had never heard before that a casual phrase or two of that kind, in an autumnal platform speech, was to be the basis and justification and plea for Parliamentary action of that serious nature. Every man who looked under the surface, and who was not either blinded or had his vision distorted by conventions of Party, knew that not only was that Amendment hollow in itself and in the plea on which it rested, but that it was insecure in its whole purport, and for the reason that they all knew perfectly well by indications that could not be mistaken, and from sources of information that were open to all of them, that there was no devouring impatience for a Dissolution on the other side of the House, and that many Members would be grievously disconcerted if that supposed desire were granted. Turning from the form and the excuse of the Amendment to its substance, he would say very briefly what he thought of it. They were asked to abandon their intention of proceeding with a series of measures approved by the majority of the Electorate who sent them there two-and-a-half years ago. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bodmin said he had no objection to the general scope of the measures of the Government, and yet he asked whether the Government intended to abandon them. The Government had done their best since they came into Office to fulfil the task which was imposed on them. In the first place they passed through the House of Commons a Home Rule Bill, which was rejected in another place. They then took up the question of Parish Government, and they passed their measure for that purpose, though in a somewhat mutilated condition. Last year they dealt with a Budget which embodied principles that had long been advocated by them. In that way the Government had gone on steadily through the Programme they had promised to do their best to accomplish; and now they were told by their opponents that they should discontinue their work—that they should absolutely discontinue it after two Sessions. They had been told not later than Saturday night that it was reprehensible, if not wicked, for a Party to have more than one measure at a time—his right hon. Friend the Member for Bodmin gave some countenance to the new theory—that if it were a Liberal measure, and, as usual, were rejected by the House of Lords, the Government should appeal to the country, and then go on repeating the process—introducing each Bill, having it rejected, appealing to the country—until the country was good enough to give them a majority which would satisfy the House of Lords. That would, in any case, be a novel, nonsensical, and absurd course; but it was a course entirely out of the question in the case of a Party of movement and a Party of ideas like the Liberal Party. [*Opposition laughter and Ministerial cheers.*] The Government measures were spoken of by their opponents as if they had been taken up for the purpose of catching votes and for the purpose of obtaining support, one for the other and each for all. But, on the contrary, the reason why the Government had so many measures in their programme was that those measures were nothing more than the necessary application to the various public questions of the day of the ideas of Liberalism; and, if they were multifarious, they were multifarious because the subjects they dealt with were bound together by a common principle. He admitted at once that the Government were at a disadvantage owing to the abundance of their programme. For strategic purposes it would be much better for them if they could concentrate all their force upon fewer points. But he was bound to say that that was a disadvantage from which in his experience he never knew the Conservative Party to suffer. He did not remember a time within the last 20 or 30 years when the Conservative Party went to the country with any positive and distinct proposal of reform. Take the case of the late Government. They were elected undoubtedly for the purpose of opposing Home Rule. But they not only opposed Home Rule, but introduced Bills that had never been spoken of at the General Election. They introduced a Coercion Act, although many of their followers were pledged against coercion. They introduced an Irish Land Act, one of the main principles of which was, according to the Leader of the Government, subversive of civil society. They carried a County Council Act, which the Liberal Party had been advocating for years, and which they had flouted, and which was sure to be most distasteful to a large number of their supporters; and now the country had an example of the spirit in which they viewed their measure by the spectacle of the whole organisation of the Conservative Party bent to curtail and weaken the Act in the largest sphere of its operation—namely, this Metropolis of London. The Conservative Government also introduced an Education Bill, which it would be universally agreed was not a spontaneous growth of Conservative soil. Therefore, if he were to look for a Party who gaily took up heterogeneous proposals for the purpose of catching votes, he would find it on the Benches opposite. The right hon. Gentleman, the Leader of the Opposition, laughed a moment ago when he described the Liberal Party as a Party of ideas. Well, suppose the Dissolution was declared to-morrow, and on Wednesday morning the right hon. Gentleman issued his address to the Division of Manchester which he honoured by representing, could the right hon. Gentleman name one single distinctive measure of reform, political or social, which his Party had ready for consideration? No, it was not the policy of the Liberal Party to live from hand to mouth, or to take up Bills and proposals according to the exigencies of the moment; and he was sure all fighting politicians on the Government side of the House envied the freedom of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition in that respect. Then it was said that, though the Government might introduce measures, those measures would not pass. But why should they assume that their Bills would be done to death by the House of Lords? Speaking for himself, he had great hopes of a different result, for, knowing how keen was the anxiety of the House of Lords to consult the interests of the Unionist Party, he thought the Government had no reason whatever to despair of their Bills. Therefore their proposals this Session were real proposals, with a firm intention behind them. They disagreed with the advice tendered them in the Amendment, and they were determined to prosecute the task which had been imposed on them by those who had placed them in power, and which, even if not immediately successful, might still be fruitful of good results. In the latter part of the Amendment the Government were invited to lay aside all their proposed Legislation, and produce the terms of their Resolution on the conflict between the two Houses. But the Government claimed the right to fix for themselves when this Resolution should be introduced—firstly, because it was their duty to discharge as well as they could the task imposed on them by the country; and, secondly, because they thought it well to choose a time that would be most likely to serve any proposal on the subject which they might make to the House and to the country. He supposed that that clause was put into the Amendment on the chance that the Government might be tempted, or taunted, or teased into letting out in a casual way in the course of debate that which they had resolved to keep to themselves. He could well believe that that was the object of the clause, and, if any Member of the Government made an incautious expression on the subject, advantage would be taken of it. But if the right hon. Gentleman who moved the Amendment had that intention, he would not catch him in the trap. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham had had his microscopic eye upon the Members of the Government during the Autumnal Recess, watching to see if any of them would let fall an unguarded expression. The right hon. Gentleman had followed him, as he told the House, to the humble but great borough of Culross, a place he was certain the right hon. Gentleman could not point out on the map. But the right hon. Gentleman was there in spirit, if not in person, when he (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman) addressed about 20 of the most respectable inhabitants of the town. He would be frank with the House, and would say, in regard to the innumerable speeches they were all of them compelled to make during the Autumn, that there was sometimes great mischief lurking under them. Every one would see that if a man of some degree of prominence, and, perhaps, of responsibility, had to make speech after speech, and speech after speech, and touch upon delicate subjects, and could not repeat in one place any of the well-chosen phrases he had used in another place—it was more than likely that on some occasion or other he might break down, and, in order to turn a sentence or complete a paragraph, make use of some hasty expression stronger than he meant, and different in some respect from something else he had said elsewhere. That, as right hon. Gentlemen opposite knew, was the condition under which all Members of Parliament lived during what was called the "Recess." Pursuing his frank vein, he must confess that, when he heard Culross mentioned, he was in great trepidation as to what were the words he had used which were thought worthy of being brought before the House, for he had not the slightest recollection of them. But he found that what he said was this:—

> "The question was whether the Representative House, which really reflected the opinion of the people of the country, should not be practically supreme, whatever power the other House might be allowed to possess in the way of offering advice as to the alteration and amendment of Bills."

Those words were perfectly innocent, perfectly in accord with common sense, and, he might add, perfectly commonplace. They were, moreover, perfectly in accord with the ideas of the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down; and, to his own still greater satisfaction, they were perfectly uncommunicative on the topics about which the right hon. Member for West Birmingham was inquisitive. He could not have done better if he had seen the right hon. Gentleman in the Autumn. He was relieved to find that this, which was selected by the right. hon. Gentleman as the weakest joint in his armour, would not even admit the tip of the right hon. Gentleman's dart. The hon. and learned Member for the Isle of Wight had also been watching the speeches of Ministers, and he had constructed a whole theory of the Recess which did great credit to his ingenuity. He had compared their speeches after the different elections, and kept a sort of time-table of Ministers' opinions, and he had found that the Government's zeal had quickened at one moment and slackened at another. He could assure the hon. and learned Gentleman that his imagination had altogether overmastered his reason, and that such differences as he imagined really existed. From first to last there had been no difference in the Government's opinion on this point; and the Government never had any other intention than that recommended by Abraham Lincoln—"to keep pegging away" at the measures in their programme. Lastly, the House had some words from his hon. Friend the Member for Northampton (Mr. H. Labouchere), who devoted the last few sentences of his speech to drawing an elaborate analogy between himself and a useful member of the animal kingdom. He was surprised at the selection made by his hon. Friend, as he should have thought that there were one or two other animals much more apposite for the comparison. His hon. Friend's analogy failed, because the animal in question had none of the resourcefulness and brilliancy of his hon. Friend. On the other hand, his hon. Friend altogether lacked the simple-mindedness and, to his credit be it said, the stubbornness of that animal. The proof of that deficiency in his hon. Friend's character was shown on Friday night, when, after a somewhat elaborate argument against the course which the Government intended to pursue, he gratified the Government by announcing that he was about to support them. That showed how ready his hon. Friend was at all times to yield his own judgment to that of his friends. He had also tried to establish a contrast, like the hon. and learned Member for the Isle of Wight; but it was a contrast, not of time, but of individuals. His hon. Friend appeared to pursue the Prime Minister with some degree of pertinacity, and he tried to establish a distinction of opinion on this subject between the Prime Minister and the rest of his colleagues. There were none of the Prime Minister's colleagues who would accept that distinction; and he could tell his hon. Friend that if he sought for proof of any divergence between the Prime Minister and his colleagues on this subject he would seek in vain. The Government resisted this Amendment because it was built on a hollow foundation; because it was their duty to the majority of the electors who placed them in Office to prosecute the task for which they were appointed; because it was the Government's right to choose their own time for opening that great question as to the House of Lords which they had indicated as certain to arise. In the meantime, the Government had every confidence that the House of Commons, having already within the last 10 days frustrated two Party manœuvres, would again defeat this one, which was even less worthy than the others, and would then, without further delay, address itself to its high function as a Legislative Assembly.

MR. G. J. GOSCHEN (St. George's, Hanover Square): The Secretary for War, at the beginning of his amusing but uninstructive speech, said he doubted whether the Opposition would be satisfied with the tactics which they had employed. If the right hon. Gentleman is satisfied so far with the progress of the Session, I think we can say that we are equally or possibly more satisfied. The right hon. Gentleman said, with a shortness of memory which also characterised the Home Secretary, that this was the third vote of censure on the Government. It is the fourth. There have been two votes taken—one with a majority of 12 on a great issue like this, and another with a majority of 20; and in both cases the Government have escaped by a smaller number of votes than their own selves. But there was a third vote of censure, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself called it, introduced by the hon. and learned Member for Waterford (Mr. J. E. Redmond). The Home Secretary invented the phrase that we had become "the comrades of the hon. Member for Waterford" because we had voted in the same Lobby with him. On a later night we had the honour of becoming the comrades of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in order to assist him in escaping defeat by his own Party. I do not know whether it is safe for Her Majesty's Government under present conditions to lay down the proposition that if you vote in a particular Lobby you become the comrades of those who vote with you; because, if I am not mistaken, that may not be the only occasion on which we shall have to become the comrades of Her Majesty's Government. The right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down said, that this had been more of a performance than a Debate. Yes; because no unofficial support had been given to Her Majesty's Government during the course of the Debate. There were two Welsh speeches made, not so much in support of the Government as in reply to an observation of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham, that the Welsh did not care for Home Rule. But no other private Member, except the hon. Member for Northampton, has been drawn as a supporter of Her Majesty's Government. That is a striking fact; and I do not think that the oldest inhabitant in this House would be able to recall a case where on a vote of censure, as the Government themselves called it, the Government had no support whatever from their own side. The Secretary for War said that the Amendment was insincere. He made a great point of the declaration that we must be insincere because we believed in all the rhetoric of Ministers during the Recess; because we took them too seriously. Ministers had been engaged, as we thought, in instructing the people. We thought that they were invited to Cardiff and other places in order to explain their policy to the people and to appeal for support. But the right hon. Gentleman has been very frank indeed. We are to take no notice whatever of all those declarations. Out of the House of Commons you may say what you like, be as indiscreet as you like. In stating his views on the House of Lords one Minister may pass as a Second Chamber man, another may declare himself an anti-Second Chamber man. That does not count. But you must not be indiscreet by one phrase in the House of Commons. The right hon. Gentleman told us that we should not be able to draw one single word from him. Is that their way of conducting business? He says: "No, we shall choose our own time." But you have chosen your own time. It was in the Recess that you opened up this question, and now, when your declarations and arguments and historical parallels can be submitted to the test of Debate, you are not going to say one single word lest it should be answered. I do not think that is a worthy attitude for the Government to take up, nor do I think that the great audiences who during the Recess have been favoured with the utterances of Ministers will be pleased to hear the ridicule which the right hon. Gentleman now pours on the performances of Ministers. I must confess to having shared the error of taking Ministers somewhat seriously. I confess that I read with care the speeches of the Prime Minister; and it is very singular that it is only after this House has met that hon. Members opposite have come to believe in the possibility of passing the measures which the Prime Minister said during the Recess could never be passed. What is the reason of their conversion? The fact is that in the case of indiscretions with regard to the House of Lords, the Party opposite have committed the same indiscretions, if they choose to call them so, with regard to the business of this House. They took up a different attitude; and I say they have misled the people with regard to this matter if they were not sincere. I believe there was to be an attempt to pass those Bills, and that forcing a quarrel on the House of Lords was the policy which was in the mind of hon. Gentlemen at the time; and it was with that view the Government were urged to proceed with what they called their programme. The right hon. Gentleman was as facetious with regard to the Government programme as he was with regard to other portions of his case. He defended the plan of a great conglomeration of measures rather than the plan of fixing on a single idea. That is not the precise point. The point is that the Government think they have a mandate. That word has been used *ad nauseam* during the Recess, and it has appeared in almost every peroration of a Minister's speech. What is the mandate? The mandate is the Newcastle programme. Besides the attack which right hon. Gentlemen contemplated on the institutions of the country, I maintain that they are entirely modifying the Parliamentary traditions and Parliamentary methods This idea that a programme is to be drawn up at an election, and then that that programme must be worked through, Ministers being put, so to speak, to piecework during the time, is a novel idea, and I believe it is hurtful to the Constitution. Let me examine this doctrine of the mandate. What happened at Newcastle? There was a caucus; and, though not presided over by a Minister, it was presided over by the chief of the wirepullers. There are strange stories told of the despotism exercised by that caucus; but that caucus grew up, and Ministers made speeches. But the caucus was the master, and Ministers now say that they are bound by the mandate imposed on them by the caucus. All I can say is this—that was not the way in which Ministers of old managed the affairs of the country. I appeal to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on this point. A few months before the Newcastle caucus met, the right hon. Gentleman protested against the idea of programmes. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that "programme" is not an English word, that he did not want programmes. Now, what is the result? I think the House will feel that this is a matter of great importance affecting the whole of our Parliamentary position in the future. Are we to be governed by a set programme which is drawn up at a given time, or are we to be governed by a Cabinet which from year to year surveys the situation and sees what are the demands of the people at the time? Can we fancy Lord Russell or the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) taking a programme which was laid out for them, and looking upon that as binding them during their Parliamentary career? There is no one who will hold that this used to be the old system; but now the Prime Minister becomes an agent of the caucus instead of being the master of his own policy. Everyone has protested against the idea that Members of this House should be simply delegates instead of representatives of the people. Now it is suggested that a Ministry is to be the agent and the delegate of a Party organisation. That is at the bottom of much of the difficulty in which the Government now find themselves; it is for that they say they have this programme hung round their necks and that they are bound to carry it out. The right hon. Gentleman believes they will be able to carry out further heroic measures during the course of this Session. He also asks us on what we found the idea that the time of Parliament is to be occupied in the discussion of measures with regard to which there is no possibility of passing them into law; and he laid at our door the charge that we are acquainted with the view that would be taken of them by the House of Lords. We are not acquainted with the view of the House of Lords, but we are acquainted with the view held by the Prime Minister, with the view held by the country at large and by the Press of the Party opposite, and it is only right hon. Gentlemen opposite who believe that there is a chance of passing those measures. The hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) took the same view as the Prime Minister; they differ on many points, but they agree that it would be a waste of time to continue with those measures. The Home Secretary thought that even if the measures did not pass the Government would have done their duty by the caucus and by the programme if those measures were forced on during the present Session, because their position would be so much improved by having passed them through the House. He instanced the case of Home Rule—a point which has been admirably dealt with by my right hon. Friend the Member for Liskeard. I will not touch upon it, except to say that with regard to all those measures hon. Members who are opposed to them believe that you have not furthered, but rather retarded, their prospects. Our great difficulty is this. We find that hon. Members opposite are fond of using phrases and generalities which have a different complexion when we are enabled to deal with them in a concrete Bill. Take, for example, their splendid phrase of "self-government for Ireland." When put into a concrete form much of the difficulty was removed, and we were able to expose the phrase and its use. Then there is the question of the Local Veto Bill. When we see the phrase embodied in a concrete shape we shall be able to deal with it as effectually. Thus, I say, we can have no objection from a Party point of view to continuing the Session; and if the right hon. Gentleman opposite said that there might be Members on this side of the House in favour of continuing, as against a Dissolution, he might have had an instinct that it would serve our Party purposes. I think he was wrong, however, in believing that there is any large body of Members on this side of the House who do not think that an immediate Dissolution would be far the best policy for the nation at large. That is the conviction of the Unionist Party, but for Party purposes this state of affairs is not at all prejudicial. I say that we are glad when we can deal with concrete Bills; but the difficulty is to pierce a shadow or to battle with a phantom. I want to know what the country would think of a House of Commons, after it has engaged on Bills which they believe, as we believe, the authors think they have little hope of passing, which enters on the policy of "filling up the cup"? Hon. Members may retire from that position now; but they cannot have read their own Press, or many of the utterances of important members of the Party, without seeing that it is to be the avowed policy that measures are to be taken that are to widen the breach between this House and the House of Lords. Hon. Members opposite consider it to be a crime on the part of the House of Lords to vote against measures passed in this House; at the same time we were told in the Recess that it would be admirable policy to increase the number of points of collision with the House of Lords. I tell those men who are in favour of such a policy that they are in favour of degrading the House of Commons to the position and to the employment of what are called *agents provocateurs* — to the position of those men who are to stimulate the offence in order that the offence shall afterwards be charged. Was the House of Commons ever put to a lower or more degraded use? The Home Secretary asked, with reference to the argument of filling up the cup, "Has the House of Lords, then, become the last refuge of the liberty of the people?" I think that the right hon. Gentleman ventured upon a very indiscreet question. It is not the last refuge of popular liberty. The Opposition in this House stands between the measures of right hon. Gentlemen opposite for coercing the liberty of the people, and the constituencies behind us are also a refuge to secure that the people shall be heard on a clear issue. There is no doubt that the House of Lords, by the confession of the hon. Member for Northampton, has, on this occasion, vindicated the right of the people to decide on an issue squarely and fairly put before them. I say that the people are being coerced by Her Majesty's Government. But the House of Lords is assisting the people of the country to prevent the Government obtaining votes which can be bought—I do not mean in any offensive sense—by legislative processes; the House of Lords are preventing the will of the people from being overridden by any such barter. Let hon. Members opposite notice this, the Member for Longford said that if the Opposition would vote for Amnesty he would cast in his lot and turn the Government out. Where then would be your Welsh Church, where then would be the Local Veto Bill, or the One Man One Vote Bill? There is no evidence that a vote given under such circumstance is given by convinced men, and surely this makes the position of the House of Lords a stronger one. The House of Lords will bend to the assured will of the people, of the majority of the people clearly expressed, but they will be serving the majority in Great Britain by opposing any measures not fairly carried in this House. There is only one point more to which I wish to call attention, but it is a very serious one. It is this—apart from our own position, is it for the good of the House of Commons, is it for the credit of the House of Commons that we should enter and pass through a Session such as this seems likely to be? I am afraid that this House has in some respects lost caste in the country. It is a fact which we must all deplore; it is a situation from which we ought all to endeavour to redeem ourselves, and I put it to every impartial man in this House whether we are likely to increase the credit of this House by attempting to legislate under existing circumstances. The Secretary of State for War thinks it a trifle to suspend over the head of the House of Commons and over the country a revolution which the Prime Minister has described as greater than any other in the last 200 years. Is it nothing to have to legislate under the shadow of such a revolution? The right hon. Gentleman calls us insincere; I am entitled to say that I cannot understand the state of mind which can induce the right hon. Gentleman to scoff at our view that, while such a revolution is hanging over the country, it is absurd to go on with the passing of these heroic measures. But I say more, it weakens the position of the House of Commons. Everyone admits that the resolution is to be proposed at the end of the Session—I do not know if hon. Gentlemen opposite will carry on the suspense still further, but, in the meantime, the great majority of the House on both sides expect a dissolution. I say it is ill legislating with a dissolution impending in the immediate future. It is demoralising to both Parties in the House, it is demoralising to the constituencies, and that is a point upon which I might almost invite the agreement of hon. Gentlemen opposite. But more than that, we know, and the Government cannot ignore the fact, that the country generally, is more anxious for other legislation than the Local Veto Bill, the Welsh Church Bill, and the other heroic measures which they contemplate. Right hon. Gentlemen opposite spoke of legislation which was humdrum, hand-to-mouth, and unambitious, and said that they would have none of it; well, I think we have seen some hand-to-mouth legislation already. I am not sure that the sudden concession of the Committee on the Unemployed was not a hand-to-mouth policy. They do not, they say, wish for a humdrum or unambitious policy; Sir, at the present time the ambition of the Government is a curse to the country. It is not by these heroic measures that they are likely to promote respect for the House of Commons. We see new forces gathering power in the country; we see, as was said by the hon. Member for West Birmingham, new questions cropping up, but what is wanted for the discussion of our present economical, financial, almost our social position, is a strong and independent House of Commons. We want an honest House of Commons; not one which is thinking of the Elections, but one which is thinking how they can best grapple with these problems. That is what we want, and for that reason, all of us will be glad when the Dissolution relieves us from a position which, I believe, is profoundly prejudicial to the House of Commons. There is no situation which is more likely to disgust the people than the continuance of the present state of things, when we are wrangling about Bills which their authors themselves but lately said they could not pass; when we cannot find time for the urgent questions which the country wishes us to discuss; when there is to be a policy, not of peace and conciliation, but of strife and war to foster greater antagonism between us; and when the Government refuse to show even the outline of the scheme which their followers discuss and toy with in the unanswered rhetoric of the platform, while Her Majesty's responsible advisers refuse to the representatives of the people the privilege of debating its high issues on the floor of this House.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) said these repeated Votes of Censure on the Address were a new, he might almost say a new-fangled, institution, which were invented a few years ago by the Irish Members under the stress of their opposition to Coercion. He thought the old Vote of no Confidence had considerable advantages over the modern method; the latter had, however, been resorted to, partly, also, because so much of the private Members' time had been taken by the Government. Under the old classic form of the Vote of no Confidence, the House used to be asked to take into consideration the whole policy of the Government, and also the probable policy of their successors, whereas they were now confined to the narrow issue of the Amendment. In a Debate of that nature they would have been considering, among other things, the promises which some of them thought were made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian, in regard to our position in Egypt; the pronouncement in regard to what was called the continuity of our foreign policy; the condition of the War Office, where many Members thought there was an enormous waste of money, to which a Liberal Administration ought to put an end; and how it came to pass that the Secretary of State for War could have time to preside over the most important Committee which had been appointed by the House for a long time, immediately before the Army Estimates were brought before the House, to which his time, in the interests of the country, should be devoted. On the other hand, they would have had before them the probable policy of the successors to the present Government, their Labour policy, for example, which was certainly worthy of consideration by the House, not after, but before the next General Election, in order that the country might have an opportunity of pronouncing upon it. The narrow issue of the actual Amendment had been exhausted by the previous speakers. He placed no confidence in the allegation that the Government decided to postpone the action against the House of Lords after the Forfar and Brigg elections because of their adverse result; nor did he believe that a certain article which had appeared in a magazine was inspired, as had been suggested, by the Prime Minister. It seemed to him to be impossible that the Government should have come to a decision, and have afterwards changed their course of action, as the hon. and learned Member for the Isle of Wight (Sir Richard Webster) had suggested. The Welsh Members were promised last year that their Bill for Disestablishment should be taken first this Session; and he did not think the Government ever intended to place the Resolution against the House of Lords in front of that measure. Then as to the Irish Land Bill, the Chief Secretary twice pledged his reputation last Session to the statement that such a Bill was necessary to the good government of Ireland; and, noting such an opinion on the part of the Government, it was impossible to believe that they contemplated indefinitely delaying either the Welsh or the Irish Bill. The Labour Members, perhaps, had some right to complain that no indication was given that a pledge extended to them last Session, in regard to a particular Bill, would be fulfilled; still, the fact must be recognised that the Government were bringing in two other Bills very closely affecting the interests of the working classes. If the Government believed that they would be able to carry those Bills —Welsh Disestablishment, Reform of the Irish Land Laws, Factory and Truck—it was certainly for them to choose the time and opportunity for doing so. The whole point of the question was in the word "if." It had been stated by a Conservative politician of eminent fighting qualities that the life of a Liberal Administration depended upon its time and opportunity for Legislation. In its power to legislate was its power to live. Destroy the one and you destroyed the other. That was true, and therefore the whole case for the Government was, whether they believed they had the strength to carry the measures they had undertaken to bring forward. An important consideration also was, whether the Resolution which was to be introduced against the House of Lords was to be of a character that would be likely to carry the country and the House of Commons with it. The class to which the Government must chiefly look for support in their action against the House of Lords was the advanced Radical element in the constituencies; and the first condition of securing that support was, that those Radicals should know what the forthcoming Resolution would really mean, how far it was to go, and whether the Government were thoroughly in earnest and meant business. Bearing in mind the many occasions on which the House of Lords had resisted and thwarted the will of the people, both in England and Ireland—many of the evils in which latter country were due to the action of that House—it was somewhat surprising to hear men ask why such a strong feeling as alleged should exist against the Upper Chamber, and why that Chamber was so unpopular. Two hon. Members opposite had asked what the House of Lords had done lately against the will of the people. In 1893 and 1894 it opposed the will of the people, throwing out, or altering out of recognition, measures affecting the people of London, and had rejected proposals which were promoted by the County Council supported by overwhelming majorities of the citizens and of the House of Commons. He believed that this question in regard to the House of Lords would become a turning-point in regard to the political action of the younger and advanced element of the Radical Party in the constituencies; that it would largely depend upon how the Government acted in this matter whether the Liberal Party would retain their support. That younger Radical element had more confidence in the Commons Members of the present Administration than in those Members who sat in the House of Lords. They admired the Budget of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the factory legislation of the Home Secretary, the Irish policy of the Chief Secretary, and the education policy of the Vice President; and they had hope and confidence in many of the younger men in the Administration—men like the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs and the Under Secretary for the Colonies. But when they turned to the House of Lords they believed that the old Whig element had still too great play; they naturally contrasted the speeches of the Members of the Cabinet in the other House with the speeches of their colleagues in the House of Commons. He did not share the views of the hon. Member for Northampton on all points, and he was not one of those who saw any objection to the choice of a Peer as Prime Minister. He could not, of course, speak of so delicate a matter as the passing over of the Leader of the House and his great services to his Party. But, apart from the personal question, many Radicals had a belief that the very fact of choosing a young Peer would give an impetus to Radicalism. They said he had everything to force him to be a Radical, for he would be suspected, being a Peer, of being a Whig. But they were, it seemed, mistaken in their calculation that Lord Rosebery was likely to be more advanced than many a Commoner. The Secretary of State for War had told the House that he could throw no light upon the terms of the Resolution. But the Government had been stating their views on the question very plainly in the country, and it did not require anyone to be a conjurer to see the general lines on which their Resolution must proceed. The Prime Minister had complained that his views had been misrepresented. What were those views? What were the views of the Government upon the subject of the House of Lords? Were they views which could reasonably be expected to raise the enthusiasm of the advanced element in the constituencies? Was there no reason to suppose that what had deadened the agitation, what had taken the whole life out of the movement against the House of Lords, was the great discrepancies and variations of language on the part of the Government and the doubt as to whether they were in earnest? In his last speech on the subject Lord Rosebery said:—

> "My attitude on the subject of the House of Lords is what it was at Glasgow and at Bradford."

What was that? At Bradford he said, "I am in favour of a Second Chamber," and "I am all for a Second Chamber." At Glasgow he said:—

> "I, at any rate, will have no part or parcel in leaving this country to the sole disposition of a single Chamber."

So important were these words that the Home Secretary, speaking at Birmingham a week later, went out of his way to comment upon them. He must have known the effect of these words in the constituencies was to take all heart out of the movement. What was the effect of the discrepancy of opinion that was revealed? He was aware of the new Government explanation of the difficulties. They said they had nothing to do with the question of a single Chamber or a Second Chamber. Then why did the Prime Minister drag that question in? They said the question was one of the predominance of the House of Commons. What exactly did predominance mean? If the country was with the Government the predominance was admitted. Therefore the whole question was whether the country was with them at any particular time. And if the House of Lords was to have the power to send them to the country whenever it chose, then they would be in exactly the same position as before the Resolution declaring their predominance was passed. But if they were going to take away the power of the House of Lords, to send them about their business, they would then leave the country to "the sole disposition of a single Chamber." He agreed with the hon. and learned Member for the Isle of Wight that the words of the Prime Minister had entirely destroyed the Resolution of the Leeds Conference. Either the Lords had the power to force an Appeal or they had not. If that power was taken from them they were entirely powerless. Most of the Ministers in the House of Commons had either avoided the subject or had spoken in the sense of the Home Secretary. If he had singled out the Prime Minister it was only because he had spoken most frequently and most frankly; but Lord Kimberley had spoken in exactly the same sense. This wonderful confusion of views was not the result of absence of thought. The Prime Minister plumed himself on his knowledge of the subject. He had, he said, made it the main study of his life. In 1888 he brought in a Bill dealing with the subject before the House of Lords, and he then said:—

> "The House of Lords without their veto would be a second-rate debating society."

He (the speaker) would be glad to save the House of Lords from that sad fate. He was in favour of enabling the Peers to sit in the House of Commons. Lord Rosebery, in one of his latest speeches, said:—

> "You cannot touch the constitution of the House of Lords without the consent of the House of Lords."

That observation was made in reply to Radical Members, who saw behind the Prime Minister's declarations in favour of a Second Chamber that reform of the House of Lords which had been preached by the right hon. Member for Bodmin, and which he frankly admitted was intended to strengthen that House instead of weaken it. There was nothing against which he personally would fight so hard and so pertinaciously as against the so-called reform of the House of Lords. The Prime Minister said they could not touch the House of Lords without the consent of the House of Lords. Could they touch the veto of the House of Lords without the consent of the House of Lords? If they were to pass by the Prime Minister's words in 1888, then they would have to meet him with his other words and say: "You cannot touch the veto without the consent of the House of Lords itself." If they were only going to make those changes in the relations of the two Houses which would have the consent of the House of Lords, they would be very small. If all the Government were able to do was to act within the lines of Lord Rosebery's words, all he could say was, that there would be a great agitation about very little, for certainly very little reform could be expected from that quarter. Was this the greatest revolution that had taken place for 200 years? If the object were only to assert the predominance of the House of Commons, he believed it would have the unanimous approval of the House. He believed every Member would vote for that. The whole question was, whether the House of Lords was to have the power to dispute the judgment of the country. If the House of Lords were to have the power, then the Government were not effectively disputing their predominance; and if they were not to have it, then they fell within the statement of the Prime Minister. The last observation he had to make was one which referred rather to a domestic quarrel on his side of the House. There could be no doubt that a large number of Radical constituencies felt serious alarm on this matter, and the longer the Government went on allowing Peers to do their talking for them, the more would alarm be excited. Radical constituencies believed that Lord Rosebery really meant what he said in his later speeches, and that his later speeches were to be read in the light of his earlier speeches. The action of the House of Lords continued to paralyse Legislation, but the Government now asked the House to go on with Legislation. Lord Rosebery told them, in spite of the words of the Home Secretary and others, in his later speeches, that there was good and fruitful work before Parliament. There were two Bills of the Home Secretary's—the Factory Bill and the Truck Bill—which were pressed for by every consideration that could commend them to the constituencies. All those who represented Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire knew how these Bills were looked for. If the Home Secretary saw any hope of carrying those Bills into law in the present Session, he, for one, would say that it had been a fruitful Session. It was clear that the Lords Resolution was to be kept back until it accompanied a Dissolution measure—namely, One Man One Vote; and that an early Dissolution was expected was shown by the fact that there was to be no Registration Bill. But while Lord Rosebery had promised Legislation in that Bill to cheapen access to Parliament, he did not think the constituencies would believe in their honesty upon that subject so long as old-fashioned electioneering like that of Evesham went on. What he wished to press upon the Government was a domestic quarrel amongst the Radicals themselves. They were not losing supporters to the Conservative Party, but there was a growing feeling in Radical constituencies of hostility to both political Parties in the State; and every breach of a supposed pledge, every hesitation, every weakness on the part of the Government, went to help that feeling. It was the hon. Member for South West Ham, and those who thought with him, that gained by this. He feared the Government were going forward to disaster under the command of those whose ambiguous language he had described, and if Radicals were to prepare themselves for this battle, the Prime Minister's trumpet would have to give forth a very much more certain sound.

Col. LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping) said, that both the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for War seemed surprised at the fact that a third vote of censure should have been brought forward when two had already resulted in defeat, and a third defeat was in prospect. The reason why the Opposition had no hesitation in bringing forward a third vote of censure was, that they knew perfectly well that the issue which was now before them was not to be determined on the floor of the House, but by the constituencies and the country at large. It was to the country that they must go, and it was by the country that this issue would be decided. They had been taunted on his side of the House by the Chief Secretary for Ireland and by the Home Secretary, with the fact that they had been acting with new confederates; but, surely, Members of the Government should be the last people in the world to make that taunt, seeing that on a very recent occasion the Conservatives had gone into the Lobby with the Government against those with whom the Government generally acted. Would either of those two right hon. Gentlemen like, on that account, to call themselves the confederates of the Conservative Party? For two years the Conservatives had been asking for a Dissolution. Why, then, should they not vote for it? The Member for Northampton, the Member for Central Edinburgh, the Member for Mid Norfolk, and the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean, each counted two on a Division, and one of them at all events, probably more, would go with the Government into the Lobby. Did the Government think that the speeches those hon. Gentlemen had delivered, in the House and out of it, would count in their favour when it came to a General Election? How were they going to explain to their constituents the fact that, after condemning the action of the Government in every line of their speeches, they proceeded to act against their con-consciences and vote with the Government they so heavily condemned? What answer, after all, had they had to arguments advanced from his side of the House? What answer had been given to the speech of the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Wight? What answer had been given to the right hon. Member for Birmingham? None yet. What were the principal points made by the Home Secretary in his answer? In the first place he got his foil in under the right hon. Gentleman's guard on an historical quotation. Historical parallels were always dangerous. But what were the other points made by the Home Secretary? That right hon. Gentleman had pronounced in favour of the Disestablishment of the Welsh Church, and that he had used the simile of "filling up the cup." There was not a man on the Opposition Benches who was not perfectly aware of that fact; but how did that answer the charge that the Government had abandoned their primary policy, and that they were bringing in measures they knew they could not pass, to waste time until the day came when they thought they could safely dissolve? That was the specific charge the Opposition made, and to that charge they got no answer. The cause of Home Rule had been set back for centuries by the production of the Bill in this House, and the electors of Forfar, Brigg, and Evesham apparently were of the same opinion. It had been said that the Welsh Members did not care for Home Rule. Many hon. Members on that side of the House thought so also, and they had reason for it from what they had witnessed in the House. If they cared for Home Rule let them dissolve and go to the country upon the definite cry of that measure. The procedure of the Government took him back to his military profession, and to a military manœuvre called "diminishing the front." That was a movement necessary when a battalion had to pass through a narrow defile, and having passed through they re-formed into line; it was not a pleasant but rather a difficult manœuvre, especially when the enemy were occupying the open ground in front. When the Government came into Office on the Home Rule Bill they advanced into the defile, and since then they had greatly diminished their front. What had become of the Home Rule section? It had broken up and passed to the rear. What had become of the Local Option section? And he might ask also what had become of the Welsh Disestablishment section, although it seemed now that they were to be put on the front and to bear the brunt of the battle? When they got through this Parliamentary defile, under what flag were the Government going to re-form? Were they going to re-form under the green flag without a Crown, or under that flag which the Chief Secretary declared he had nailed to the mast, or would it be under the leek? If under the latter they would most assuredly have to eat it. The other night the Leader of the House amused them with a simile in which he compared the right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, with Hotspur. He meant, no doubt, to refer to Prince Hal, but it was a pity that he did not carry the illustration a little further and give them an additional quotation, and have said with the dying king—

> "Heaven knows, my son,
> By what by-paths, and indirect crook'd ways,
> I met this Crown."

*MR. J A. PEASE (Northumberland, Tyneside) stated that the supporters of the Government had been twitted by the right hon. Member for St. George's, and the right hon. Member for the Isle of Wight, for not having intervened in the Debate. He could assure the House no discourtesy was intended by their reticence. They, on that side of the House, had abstained for two reasons, the first, because, in their opinion, the Speech of the Home Secretary on Friday night had been a complete answer to the speeches of the Opposition, and the case for the Amendment had been entirely demolished. Secondly, because they felt responsible to their constituencies for any time they would occupy in protracting a debate, when, in their opinion, the time might be better employed. The hon. Member for Birkenhead had attempted to justify the action of the House of Lords in rejecting the Bills which were passed through this House, by pointing out that those Bills would have been rejected even if those who voted by virtue of the hereditary principle had abstained. But the charge was not merely that the other House was an hereditary body, but an irresponsible body, which, perhaps unconsciously, supported their own interests and neglected those of the country. The hon. and learned Member for the Isle of Wight had done his best to break down the arguments of the Home Secretary, but had not met with success; and it would be a difficult thing, he thought, for that right hon. Gentleman, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bodmin as well, to prove the consistency of the Opposition in calling at one and the same time for Dissolution, Legislation in respect of the agricultural distress and the unemployed, and for the production of the Resolution dealing with the House of Lords. The late Attorney-General had stated the Government "dare not face the country." The Tories argued if the country was with the Government, it ought to be proved, if the country was against them, they had no right to hold office. If such arguments were accepted, no Government would be able to retain power for many weeks without constant appeals to the country. But the course of the supporters of the Government was clear. They had received a mandate from the constituencies, and as long as Bills were introduced carrying out that mandate, it was their duty to support the Government. The course of the Government was equally clear, and he thought so long as they had a majority they ought to continue to pass Bills, irrespective of what might happen to them in another place, over which neither the Government nor the country had control. The new comradeship which seemed to have sprung up between the Parnellites and the Conservatives had been repudiated by more than one of the latter in the course of that Debate; but all he could say was, that they could do with those votes on his side of the House, not merely because they wished to secure additional votes, but because if the Home Rule Members showed a united front in resisting the party opposed to Home Rule, so much the more would their Home Rule supporters in the country be encouraged, and so much the more rapidly would Home Rule be secured. They were not going to appeal to the country simply because the House of Lords had thrown out certain Bills, for they were not disposed to allow that House to dictate to the Government and to the House of Commons when they should dissolve. If the Bills foreshadowed in the Queen's Speech were rejected by the Lords, it would only show the extent to which the Upper House was out of sympathy with the people; then would be the time for the Government to go to the country with the irresistible demand for an alteration of the constitution and in favour of one which would be based upon truly representative lines. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham had remarked that the movement against the House of Lords had fallen flat in the country; the time was however, past, when it was any use to urge the Lords by passing Resolutions at monster meetings, and the working classes now were content to rely upon their votes, but there was not a single meeting of the Party in the country at which the question had not been discussed and had not occupied the foremost place in the proceedings, and about which the greatest enthusiasm prevailed. Truly, some of the bye-elections had not been recently favourable to the Government, but at the bye-elections sinister influences had been at work; at a General Election it would be impossible for a crowd of paid canvassers from Ireland to flood the constituencies. He thought they could await with confidence the production of the Ministerial Resolution respecting the House of Lords; and he believed that when brought forward it would destroy the power of that House to reject Bills passed by the popularly elected Representatives of the people.

MR. W. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick) said, that the right hon. Member for West Birmingham had asserted that the primary object of this Government was Home Rule. He was sorry that he could not agree with the right hon. Gentleman. Judging from the utterances of the Prime Minister and other inferences, he was afraid that the Home Rule question had receded rather than advanced as far as the Government were concerned. In the speech delivered on Friday by the Home Secretary there was scarcely a word about Home Rule. It was not mentioned in the Speech from the Throne, and it had no place in the Sessional programme. The right hon. Member for West Birmingham had told the House that the work contemplated by the Government was the work of "filling up the cup," and the Home Secretary said that that cup was manufactured in Birmingham ten years ago. Although it had been going round ever since it was apparently not yet full, and the measure was to be made up with Welsh Disestablishment, a Local Veto Bill, an Irish Land Bill, and other measures. He was wholly in favour of the Disestablishment of the Welsh Church, for he did not approve of the union of Church and State. Wherever there was a fusion of the temporal and spiritual authorities very few civil rights were left to the subject. Therefore his deepest sympathy was with the Welshmen in their endeavour to disestablish the Church. But, as a Home Ruler, he should like Home Rule to occupy the foremost place in the legislative programme. He had been sent to that House as an Irish Home Ruler, and not as a British reformer. He was as much in favour of a Land Bill for Ireland as any man could be, and he also wished to see a Town Tenants Bill pass into law, because tenants in towns had received hitherto no protection whatever. But what was the attitude of the Government in respect of this Land Bill? They said they were willing to introduce it after Welsh Disestablishment. Why not before? It was a much more pressing question. And why did the Government object to supply information as to the counter stages of the Bill? If they were in earnest about it they would give the measure the first place in their programme, and if it should fail to pass they would dissolve and go to the country on the question of Home Rule. He had no confidence in the Government, and for this reason: Last year they were told that an Evicted Tenants Bill was to be passed, and the promise of that measure was used as a means of keeping a majority of the Irish Members in attendance in the House in order that they might vote with the Government in support of British measures. Genuine Home Rulers ought not to allow themselves to be made part of a voting machinery for keeping the Government in Office, when it had not the power, even if it had the will, to pass remedial measures for Ireland. Some people said that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was "riding for a fall" on the question of Local Veto, and he thought that such a "welter weight" as the right hon. Gentleman would get a fall if he should attempt to push on Temperance Legislation this Session. He was himself in favour of Legislation of that kind, based upon reasonable ground, but he did not think that this was the proper time to appeal to the country on the question of Local Option. The Parnellite Members had been told that they were anxious to hasten the advent to Office of a coercion Government. If there was danger of coercion, why did not the Government repeal the Crimes Act? Why did they not remove that instrument of coercion? Why not spike the gun? There was, however, an almost worse form of coercion — namely, financial coercion. The Chancellor of the Exchequer extracted all he could from the Irish taxpayer and gave as little as he could in return. There was a measure before the House for granting £80,000 for the relief of distress in Ireland. That distress he ascribed to rack rents, absenteeism, the system of governing Ireland from this country, and other causes which had cursed Ireland for generations. He did not regard the proposed expenditure of £80,000 as at all generous. The money was their right, because the first duty of a Government was the preservation of the people, and a failure to fulfil that duty justified revolution. £80,000 was an inadequate sum. £250,000 had been obtained from Ireland by excessive taxation in the past and present years, and that amount ought to be devoted to relieving the distress. He remembered how last Session a sum of £200,000 was voted in a few minutes for the erection of a new picture gallery in Trafalgar Square. Surely the lives of Irish peasants were as valuable as any works of art! Instead of Home Rule being now in a prominent portion of the Liberal Programme, it was removed from election speeches. The Government ought to follow the advice of the late Prime Minister, who retired from Office because the Government would not appeal to the country on the issue of Home Rule. He wished to draw attention to a remark of Lord Salisbury on Saturday, in which he said if Home Rule was adopted by the electors the House of Lords would not throw it out. He thought it was time the Government appealed to the country, and until Ireland again blocked the way British electors would not realise the necessity, if they were to get their own reforms, of passing Home Rule. He was prepared to vote with the Member for West Birmingham, but on wholly different grounds. In his opinions he was diametrically opposed to the right hon. Gentleman, but he should vote with him on this occasion. One of the reasons why he thought Home Rule should be brought forward was the extraordinary attitude of the Prime Minister with regard to the other House. When he first came into Power he told them he would divest himself of his outer garment in order to face the fight, but somehow the political atmosphere, like the weather, has sunk below zero, and he had to put on his garments again. Here they had proposed a revolution without a leader, and he wanted to know were the Irish Home Rulers to wait until this revolution took place. It was a dangerous position for the Home Rulers to be in, and therefore he thought that the issue of Home Rule, apart from the House of Lords, the Land Bill, and the Welsh Bill, ought to be put before the country.

*Mr. H. E. KEARLEY (Devonport) observed that it was a matter of satisfaction they were now reaching the last stage of a Debate which had proceeded for a fortnight, and which had consumed much valuable time. He supposed it would some day be deemed necessary to alter the procedure of this House, so that so much valuable time would not be occupied in the discussion of the Address. They should probably find later on that the Opposition would be complaining that they had not had afforded them adequate time for the discussion of the important questions that would be brought forward; but he must say he could scarcely realise how it could be expected that the Government would be able to afford a liberal modicum of time later on, considering the excessive waste that had taken place during these Debates. He thought it was practically unprecedented that the Address should be made the vehicle of three distinct Votes of Censure on Her Majesty's Government within a fortnight. Such procedure was the more extravagant when it was remembered that the principles laid down in these Amendments were mutually self-destructive and inconsistent with each other. That, however, need not be a matter of surprise when they considered the composition of the sections from which the Amendments had sprung. Whatever else this Session might be memorable for it would be remarkable for the foundation of a new triple alliance. The Government had been perpetually attacked by the Opposition, because they were supported by a majority that was not homogeneous. Lord Salisbury, with that eloquence peculiarly his own, once described the Ministerial majority as the sweepings of the United Kingdom, and he was especially bitter as to that part of it which he said was recruited from the south and west of Ireland. What had been witnessed in the last fortnight? They had seen the unscrupulous Opposition coquetting, as they did in 1885, with those very men from the south and west of Ireland.

The fact that the Government had occasionally received support from those men, was deemed to be one of the blackest counts in the indictment against Liberalism. Opposition, like misfortune, made one acquainted with strange bed, fellows, and therefore hon. Members had been treated to the spectacle of the entire Tory and Unionist party being led into the Lobby under the command of those very men whom the Opposition frequently told the Government had been branded by the Parnell Special Commission as men guilty of treasonable combination and incitement to crime. There had been three votes of censure moved during the last fourteen days. The first was intended to proceed on territorial lines and to be in defence of territorial interests; but the Opposition had not the courage to let such an Amendment stand by itself; they required to saccharine it with the popular condiment of the unemployed, which they borrowed from the hon. Member for South West Ham. The hon. Member for Waterford, in introducing his Amendment, said the Government ought either to introduce a Home Rule Bill or dissolve. The hon. Gentleman claimed that Ireland blocked the way. He could understand the hon. Member's Amendment in favour of a Dissolution, but he could not reconcile the claim the hon. Gentleman made with his previous support of the demand of the Opposition that there should be Legislation on British agricultural questions. The hon. Member refused to support the Government in their proposed Liberal—aye, and Irish—Legislation, but he was prepared to co-operate with the Tory demand for Legislation, which would naturally have to proceed, if it were to be acceptable, on Tory lines. They would, however, be able to judge as to the extent of the hon. Gentleman's consistency by the attitude he assumed to-night. What did the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham seek to do? He sought to substitute for the Government programme, which included an Irish Land Bill, a proposal to effect what he described as a Constitutional revolution. The whole tenour of the speech of the hon. Member for Waterford was, that it was altogether monstrous that the Government should think of putting the House of Lords question before the question of Home Rule. In view of such tactics it seemed to him (Mr. Kearley) to require a trinity of incongruity in the House to represent a unity of hostility in the Lobby. After the powerful speech of the Home Secretary he had been anxious to see whether any of the Friends of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, would endeavour to explain away the speeches the right hon. Gentleman made in Wales in 1886. The right hon. Gentleman's henchman, the right hon. Member for Bordesley (Mr. Jesse Collings) was in his place. He hoped they might have the privilege of hearing from him, explanations which were altogether wanting in the speeches of his Leader, The right hon. Member for West Birmingham told the Welsh people in 1886, to refuse Home Rule, because it would destroy their chances of Disestablishment. The Welsh refused the bait. But the right hon. Gentleman still said the Welsh cared nothing for Home Rule, but they cared everything for Disestablishment. The Member for West Birmingham had described himself as a Dissenter, ardent for Disestablishment; but now that the Government had placed Disestablishment in the fore-front of their Sessional programme, he was determined to punish the Welsh people for rejecting his advice by preventing Disestablishment being passed through the House of Commons. The right hon. Gentleman knew perfectly well that the Unionist Party never could, and would not attempt to, carry Disestablishment; and he knew also that the only Party who would attempt to carry it was the Liberal Party. And yet, simply because he disapproved of the policy of the Liberal Party in connection with an island 60 miles away from the Welsh Coast, he was determined that the Welsh should not have Disestablishment. Let hon. Members assume for a moment that Home Rule was capable of producing all those evils ascribed to it by its enemies, did it necessarily follow that other proposals of the Government must be prone to evil? If the right hon. Gentleman and his Friends could not undertake to accept anything at the hands of a Liberal Government he wondered they had not gone the full length and refused to accept from them additions to the Navy. But what was really the motive of the attitude of the right hon. Gentleman? Was it that he really had at heart the maintenance of the House of Lords? He did not hesitate to say that by putting the question of the House of Lords in front of the Disestablishment the right hon. Gentleman hoped to cover his own retreat and to escape an explanation of his own inconvenient utterances. In his other recantations—for instance when he abandoned Home Rule and now when he supported the Lords—the right hon. Gentleman had always pleaded imperial zeal, but he did not think any such plea could be urged to cover the retreat on the question of Disestablishment. The hon. Member hoped the Government would go steadily and steadfastly forward with their programme. It was true that, prior to the opening of the Session, the Liberal Party were somewhat disheartened, but since the House had re-assembled, and it was found that the Government were in good fighting form, he had no fear they would not receive the loyal support of their friends.

Mr. VICARY GIBBS (Herts, St. Albans) said, the hon. Member for Devonport was shocked at the amount of time wasted in discussing the Address. Well, the hon. Gentleman had himself wasted twenty minutes in advancing several ridiculous charges against the Unionist Party. The hon. Gentleman charged them with a terrible alliance because they had recently gone into the same Lobby with the Parnellite Members. It seemed to him (Mr. Gibbs) that natural justification for voting with anyone was agreement with the proposal they brought forward, and that exactly was the position taken up by the Unionist Party on the occasion referred to. The Unionist Party desired that the opinion of the country should be taken on Home Rule, and they therefore voted for a Motion to that effect, no matter what its source might have been. For the hon. Member to charge the Unionist Party also with co-operating with people of whose antecedents they had disapproved, was another absurdity. The hon. Gentleman knew perfectly well that on the same ground he might, with equal justice, charge the Unionist Party with being the colleagues, supporters, and confederates of the present Government. The hon. Member also seemed to think that it was very unreasonable in them to support one Amendment advocating an immediate Dissolution, and another advocating that measures should be taken to meet the agricultural depression. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman had not heard of what the lawyers called "alternative pleas." [Mr. T. M. Healy: "The phrase is 'alternative and inconsistent pleas.'"] He was much obliged to his hon. and learned Friend, but he would adopt his own form of the words. It was perfectly logical for them to say that the Government ought not to trifle or palter with the question of the House of Lords any longer, but take the opinion of the country upon it; and that if the Government did not take that course, they ought to deal with the serious and important question of agricultural depression rather than the measures they had put into their programme. But the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Forest of Dean was more worthy of attention. The right hon. Gentleman was not the first Member on the other side of the House who had declared that he would vote with the Government although he disapproved of the policy of the Government. He wondered how many more hon. Gentlemen on the same side they would hear speak in the same terms? The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War had told them that they must not believe the tales told to them about differences between the Prime Minister and the Leader of the House as to the course to be adopted about the House of Lords. Well, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Forest of Dean had told them that, while they could trust the Leader of the House, they could not trust the Prime Minister, and had followed that statement up with a most damaging and crushing attack on the Government and their method. The right hon. Gentleman had shown the tremendous divergence which existed between different speeches of different Members of the Government in the country; that they were not prepared either to abolish the Second Chamber altogether or to make it what Lord Rosebery had called, "a second-class debating society," and that in fact they were prepared to do nothing at all. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Forest of Dean considered that the House of Lords was unpopular. The Unionist Party considered that the House of Lords was popular in the country, particularly on account of its action in regard to Home Rule; and in order to decide which was right—they or the Government—they invited the Government to bring the matter to the test of a General Election. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War twitted the Leader of the Opposition on the want of astuteness he had shown in dealing with the Amendment on the agricultural depression. Well, astuteness was not one of the merits on which the Unionist Party prided themselves. Knowing, as they did, the terrible sufferings which were being endured in the agricultural districts owing to the depression; feeling that the Government did not adequately realise the situation, and that instead of taking measures to deal with the distress, they proposed to waste the time of the House in a futile effort to destroy the Establishment in Wales; the Unionist Party did not pause to consider what was the astute course to take, but they took the straightforward course of expressing their opinion of the conduct of the Government, and of warning them of the fate they were certain to receive for their indifference at the hands of the constituencies. The Home Secretary, in his speech on Friday night, declared that it would not do for Members of the Unionist Party to say in the House what they had been saying up and down the country, that the House of Lords would exercise a useful function in modifying or rejecting measures sent up to them from the House of Commons. He was perfectly prepared to say it, and he could not understand why anyone who pleased should not say it. It was not out of order or discreditable to say it. It was perfectly true that the House of Commons was directly representative of the country, and that the House of Lords was not. But when they considered the large number of questions that were brought before the House, and the rapidity with which opinions were changed—as was shown by the frequent spectacle of Members on both sides being twitted with opinions they had expressed directly contrary to the opinions they now entertained—it was only right that the country should get the opportunity of revising its judgment on an important question. Hon. Gentlemen opposite knew that they could not say with certainty that they represented the feelings of the country; and therefore, it did not become them to go about the country proclaiming that they intended to introduce an enormous and drastic change in the Constitution, and then, when they met the House of Commons, decline to show their hand. That might be a sample of the astuteness, which the hon. Member for Devonport charged the Unionist Party with lacking, but it did not seem to him to be consistent with the best sort of statesmanship, or with the best regard for the dignity and credit of the House. The Secretary for War had given an amusing description of the disadvantages under which Members of Parliament laboured in having to make speeches to their constituencies. "They are but phrases," said the right hon. Gentleman, "and phrases do not indicate policy." But if phrases used by responsible Ministers in the country were to have no weight, and could be repudiated in the House, then, indeed, the making of those speeches was a "ploughing of the sands of the seashore," was a waste of time, and was an insult to the constituencies, which he was sure many constituencies would not tolerate. The Secretary of State for War said that the sources of information open to the Government made it certain that no one on the Opposition side of the House desired a Dissolution. He should like to know what those sources were. Personally, of course, no Member of Parliament desired a Dissolution, because no Member of Parliament desired the expense, trouble, and risk involved in an election. But politically, the Conservative Party were unanimous in desiring a Dissolution, and were perfectly confident, as were most hon. Members on the opposite side of the House, as to what the result of an appeal to the constituencies would be. The Government talked in a big way about the House of Lords when they were in the country; but their big talk shrivelled up to nothing when they came to the House of Commons. Like Bob Acres, in the comedy, their talk was full of "'Ods! swords, pistols and daggers!" till they came on to the ground; and then their courage oozed out of their finger-tips.

Mr. M. M. BODKIN (Roscommon, N.) said, that he, as a Nationalist Member opposed this Motion for the same reason that the right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) moved it, namely, that it was a vote of censure on the Government for making Home Rule the primary policy. Though the right hon. Gentleman was not present, he was glad to see him so ably and faithfully represented by the right hon. Member opposite (Mr. Jesse Collings). What he had to say about the right hon. Member he would say with as much delicacy as possible, knowing that anything harsh would have even a greater effect on his sensitive representative than on himself. The right hon. Member for West Birmingham, from his point of view, was justified in his action. The Government had indeed made Home Rule their primary policy. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had declared in the plainest possible language and with the utmost deliberation that Home Rule was the primary policy of the Government; and the Home Secretary had repeated that declaration. They had further declarations from the Chief Secretary when he once again nailed the green flag to the mast and said that the Government would fight the battle of Home Rule to the last. For that reason the Government was entitled to the support of all Nationalists. As a Nationalist, he had no objection whatever to the attempt to deprive the House of Lords of what the Leader of the Opposition had called "their control of the popular Assembly." He did not regard such an attempt as in the nature of a Revolution; and he would give substantial authority for his view such as the right hon. Member for West Birmingham would recognise as most authoritative. Irish Nationalists desired to pass Home Rule, and they knew that the House of Lords was at present the only obstacle to Home Rule. But for the House of Lords Home Rule would now be the law of the land. He had never regarded this policy of depriving the House of Lords of its control of the House of Commons as being in any way hostile or rival to the policy of Home Rule. It was auxiliary; and whoever else opposed the attack on the Lords, the Nationalists would not hesitate a moment in responding to the call to join it. Whatever other country had suffered from the House of Lords, Ireland had suffered most of all. In the present Parliament, the only Bills which the Lords had ventured to reject were two Irish Bills, supported by a large Irish majority. They had indeed mutilated several British Bills as well; but they had not rejected them. Ireland was really governed and legislated for by the House of Lords because it had been proved over and over again that Ireland could have no Bill of which the Lords did not approve. The Lords would oppose any Bill which was supported by the majority of the Irish representatives. It was enough to damn a Bill in the House of Lords that the Irish nation desired it. He did not ask any hon. Member to take his word only for that statement. He held in his hand a rare and precious little volume, the author of which—with the modesty which was his most eminent characteristic—had desired to withdraw from the attention of the public. The book was entitled "The Authorised Edition of the Speeches of the Right Hon. Gentleman Joseph Chamberlain, M.P., with a Sketch of His Life"—not unfortunately brought up to date—"edited by H. W. Lucy." He found stamped on the cover the words "Supplied for the Public Benefit." He believed that the book had been very much for the public benefit, and he desired the public to be most fully acquainted with the passage which he was about to quote. Although he differed from the right hon. Gentleman in many matters he was in entire accordance with him in the following passage, which was described in the Authorised Edition as "Plain Words to the Peers":—

> "I am going to ask you to follow me into an examination, into the baneful influence which this assembly exercises upon the great interests of the Empire."

Since then, it had become the guardian of the Empire.

> "I will ask you to have regard to the grievances of Ireland, and I will ask you to consider still another question which is perhaps more interesting, that is the Principality of Wales. With regard to Ireland, you know that the condition of that country is the constant preoccupation and anxiety of English statesmen. After centuries of a hollow Union, the people are still discontented. We hold our own, now in the 19th century, as we did in the 17th, by an overwhelming display of military force. We have been unable to rest ourselves

> upon the affections of the people; and this state of things, so discreditable to a free country, is due mainly, if not entirely, to the action of the House of Lords—to the action of that club of Tory landlords, which, in its gilded chamber, had disposed of the welfare of a people with almost exclusive regard to the interests of a class."

He did not think that that chamber, so accurately described by the right hon. Member for West Birmingham, in his Radical days, was entitled to, or would receive much sympathy from the Irish Members. In the same speech the right hon. Gentleman quoted with approval the saying of a certain Rumbold, a fugitive soldier in the time of the Stuarts, that he would believe in hereditary legislators when he found men born into the world, some with saddles on their backs, and others with bits and spurs ready to ride them. Since then the right hon. Gentleman had given his adherence to the principle of hereditary legislators. He had convinced himself that he was one of those born with a saddle, and he and his retinue were making broad their backs for aristocratic riders. The right hon. Member for West Birmingham said that the Irish Members represented no national sentiment in Parliament, and he said that Home Rule had a speculative fancy for the Irish people. He told the right hon. Gentleman, however, that the Irish Members came to Parliament as Home Rulers, and that they would remain there as such; and if for a moment they faltered in the sacred trust committed to their charge by the Irish people they would be driven from the places which they now occupied. The Irish Members and the Irish people did not change their principles and their convictions with the grace and facility which the right hon. Gentleman so eminently displayed. The speech of the right hon. Gentleman had been answered, however, completely and admirably by the Home Secretary. He and his hon. Friends enjoyed that display as thoroughly as it was possible to enjoy any scene in the Imperial Parliament. The audience had been assembled, and he might say that it was a very fashionable audience. The lesson taught to the right hon. Gentleman by that Debate was that he should not bring his audience until he was quite sure of the result. The display took a form which was possibly not anticipated by the right hon. Gentleman. The audience saw the offence, and it saw the punishment as well; and he thought the right hon. Gentleman might well have said to the Home Secretary at the conclusion of the combat—

> "Oh! thou hast overthrown me and my pride;
> The Duke has seen me fall!"

The House was told that the three Amendments which had been moved to the Address were, if not consistent, at least alternative; and one hon. Member who advanced this plea took his illustration from the law. As a lawyer the hon. Gentleman, no doubt, understood what alternative pledges were; and he would better the illustration of the hon. Gentleman by another example borrowed from his early experience of the law with reference to an action for the recovery of a boiler. The three alternative pleadings were—first, that the boiler was cracked when he got it; secondly, that it was whole when he returned it; and, thirdly, that he did not get it at all. He thought that this analogy of legal alternatives applied admirably to the three Amendments on the Address. He and his hon. Friends were opposed to this Amendment because it deprived the Irish tenants of a good chance of getting a good Bill through the House of Commons dealing with the question of Irish land. He believed that the House of Lords would think twice before they rejected such a measure. He had very little confidence in the justice of the House of Lords, though he had considerable confidence in the fears of the Peers. Ulster was determined upon having this Bill, and he did not think that the House of Lords would care to run the risk and the dangers of a conflict. If they did he had no reason to fear the alternative, because the action of the House of Lords would prove to the farmers of Ulster that they could hope for no justice from an Imperial Parliament dominated by the House of Lords. If Ulster failed to get this Land Bill the action of the House of Lords would convert a dozen seats in Ulster at present held by Unionists to the Home Rule policy. The Irish Members still held to the belief that the Government meant good faith towards them, and they certainly meant good faith towards the

Government. The Irish Members had promptly repudiated the charge of disloyalty on their part towards the cause of Wales; the Irish Members were willing to help the Welsh Members forward in the struggle which they had set their hearts upon winning. If the Irish Members were not Christian enough to do good for evil they at least were Christian enough to do good for good. He believed that Scotland would be true to the Irish cause in the future as she had been in the past; and he believed eventually the Irish people would secure their Bill, for Home Rule, he believed, was the primary policy of the Government. Home Rule held the field, and in his judgment it would soon win the field. He believed that the greatest Englishman of all, who had enjoyed in the course of his grand career so many triumphs, and no permanent failure, would live to see this last great cause to which he had set his hand happily accomplished.

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley) argued that the contention of the hon. Member with reference to the action of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham was not worth replying to; it pleased hon. Members, and it caused no great harm to his right hon. Friend. One of the most interesting features of the Debate had been the attitude of those hon. Members who proclaimed themselves to be the advanced Radical Party. As he listened to their speeches his estimate of the political insight of Lord Rosebery had increased immensely. Lord Rosebery might have argued in this way—

> "It does not matter how I neglect this so-called Radical Party, or how I leave them out of account; provided I allow them to make strong speeches in and out of Parliament, I am always absolutely sure of their votes."

It was contended that the narrow issue involved in this Amendment was whether or not the Government would disclose the Resolution affecting the House of Lords now or later. His opinion was that the Government had no Resolution to disclose at all, and he objected to the issue being narrowed in such a manner. The question was a much wider one. It was whether or not the Government, which had lost the confidence of the country, which was going in opposition to the will of the people, should retain their offices merely for the sake of being in power. How was it likely that a Government with a Prime Minister holding the rank of a Peer, with a large proportion of the Members of the Government Peers, would be able to get up a crusade against the House of Lords. The Secretary of State for War had simply left the question where he found it. The right hon. Gentleman said that the late Government, although elected to oppose Home Rule, had yet carried out a number of other measures for the benefit of the country as to which they were not elected to deal with. It was true that the late Government, in addition to opposing Home Rule, did cast out County Government; but the right hon. Gentleman's own Government, having had it down in 1882, 1883, 1884, and 1885, did not carry that policy out. So with Free Education; the Government of the right hon. Gentleman had promised it, though the Unionist Government carried the scheme into law. The right hon. Gentleman's Government was a Government of promises, while the Unionist Government was, and would be, a Government of performances. The Debate would be extremely useful for its educative effect on the country, because it had made one or two things very clear. The first thing the country would understand from the Debate was that this Government was going to remain in power as long as it was possible for them to do so, not because they could do any work, but because those who supported them dreaded equally with themselves an Appeal to the country. Another thing made clear was that Home Rule was to be the main thing upon which the Government would appeal to the country. Hitherto, in nine cases out of ten, that question had been shirked or covered over with a cloud of other questions. Home Rule, having been carried through the Commons by means of the gag, was rejected by the House of Lords, and therefore there was to be an agitation against the House of Lords; but the Government knew the House of Lords had the country at its back; and so it became a question what was to be done. It was determined to bring in a wagon-load of other measures, not on their merits, not to be passed, but to furnish the pretext for a quarrel with the

House of Lords, and to fill up the cup. By this sandwiching policy the agitation against the House of Lord was to be galvanised into life, and the electors were to be deceived into accepting Home Rule gilded with other measures. The parallel instituted by the Home Secretary between the position of the present Ministry and that of Lord Melbourne—which introduced Free Trade and carried it in five years—did not hold good, because, instead of there being any agitation in the country for Home Rule, such agitation as existed was against Home Rule and in support of the House of Lords. A Dissolution at the present time would put an end to the solemn farce of a Government without power wasting the time of Parliament; but, from a Party point of view, he questioned whether it would be well to have an immediate Dissolution. There were other cups that could be filled up besides that against the House of Lords, and the Government were fast filling up the cup of discontent with themselves in the constituencies. They were in the position of guests out-staying their welcome; they were sticking to Office after confidence had been withheld and power taken away from them. They might scrape through the present Session and add another barren Session to their record; but every week would fill up their cup in the country, and the longer the Election was delayed the larger would be the majority against them. The Government came into power not on Home Rule, but with votes given to them on a number of social questions, and what had they done? They had wasted two Sessions mainly on Home Rule. No doubt the Parish Councils Act was a good measure; but its value had been discounted, because it had been said that it would bring about a millennium, and disappointment was following the discovery that it would do nothing of the kind. This Session we are to have disestablishment, but it did not interest the general run of the constituencies, who wanted instead what they had been promised in the form of social legislation. As to Irish land legislation, the electors were saying—

> "What! another Irish Land Bill; when the position of the Irish farmer is better than that of any other farmer in the world."

As to Local Veto, would hon. Members say the country was crying out loudly for that? The Government listened to organised groups of politicians and mistook their views for the voice of the country. Of each organised group they asked, "What do you want?" but large as was the voting power of these groups it was not to be compared with the voting power of the mass of the people. The Home Secretary set little store by "hand-to-mouth, unambitious measures" of social reform; but it was for these the Government came into power. Just before the last General Election there was held in London a conference of labourers, delegates from the rural districts; and with them the most urgent of all questions was the improvement of cottage accommodation, which figured largely in the election addresses of the supporters of the Government, as did also some well-considered scheme for enabling the labourer to end his days in decent comfort. What had been done to redeem these promises? He believed nothing; and he believed also the latter question did not find a place even in the Newcastle Programme. Even hon. Members who had mentioned it in their addresses voted against the hon. Member for Cambridge when he brought it forward. The people were more interested in these humdrum topics than they were in Home Rule. Perhaps the weakest part of the Home Secretary's speech was the attempt to convict the Liberal Unionists of inconsistency by making quotations from their speeches. Of course that had nothing to do with the question before the House; but if you were to go back ten years, you could quote plenty of Liberal Unionist speeches against Conservatives and Conservative speeches against the Liberal Unionists. But since that time things had been much altered. The Liberal Unionists had joined the Conservatives. [*Ironical Ministerial cheers.*] Yes; but when did the supporters of the Government join? Take the speeches of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, of the right hon. Member for Midlothian, and almost any occupant of the Treasury Bench; they were so violent against their present allies that they could scarcely be quoted in the House. The fact was there had been a re-formation of Parties since then. Before the accession of the present Government there was no one who wanted to know more than did the Home Secretary what his Party were going to do; he was almost a Liberal Unionist in the expression of his eagerness; but when he came to hold a brief for the Government he could describe the Liberal Unionists as political apostates. In the eyes of the country now there were only two parties, and two only—a section of the old Liberal Party, and what used to be called the Tory Party, but which was now the Liberal Unionist Party. The cry of Liberal and Tory helped the Government in 1886 and in 1892, because the traditions of the old Liberal Party were appropriated by them. Voters found out that they were trading on the old trade-mark of the Liberal Party, and the issue was now between Home Rule and no Home Rule. The cry of Liberal *versus* Tory had no more significance as a Party cry at present than that of Cavalier and Roundhead. The alliance between Conservatives and Liberal Unionists has been ratified by time. It was never stronger than at present. Both sections of the alliance were united in opposition to Home Rule, and a desire to carry out social legislation, and the alliance received approval in the result of the elections at Forfar, Brigg, and Evesham. At a General Election, it would be ratified by scores of constituencies. On the other hand, the union between the Government and the Irish Nationalist Party was not so strong as it was, it had not been ratified by the constituencies, and would receive less and less the approval of the country. The more Home Rule was understood the less the country would have to do with it, and this was one reason why a General Election was put off. But Unionists would have more time to make the country acquainted with it. In many parts of the country in 1892, it was difficult in the rural districts of England to interest any one in it. In the Evesham Division, when the labourers were told what it was, they would have nothing to do with it. When they found it would cost their county £7,000 or £8,000, they decided that they could spend the money in a better way. The nonsense of the statement that England was governing Ireland with "the iron heel of oppression" was being seen. The fact was that the Irish Nationalist Members were the absolute masters of the present Government. The attention of Parliament for the next five or six years ought to be given to social legislation. Parliament, it was true, could not raise wages, but it could improve the condition of the people by following out the lines of the legislation of the Unionist Government from 1886 to 1892. The country was fast seeing the necessity for a stronger Government than the present to carry out these principles; a Government without the millstone of Home Rule hung about their necks, and with the confidence of the country. With such a Government they would be able to carry out the legislation for which the country was waiting, and solve at any rate the questions which were pressing.

Mr. S. STOREY (Sunderland) said, the speech of the right hon. Member agreed with that of other speakers in one thing—namely, that the Session which they were now entering upon was to be a barren Session, and that the measures which the Government were going to submit to the House were not to pass into law, and that the only remedy was to cease their labours, propose the Resolution, if it existed, and immediately go to the country. Everyone knew that the House of Commons was the very worst business place in the kingdom, but if they were sometimes to examine matters in the light of plain common sense they might arrive at a more satisfactory conclusion. They had before them two clear alternatives. From the Government they had the proposal in the Queen's speech that they should at once proceed to pass the Welsh Disestablishment Bill, the Irish Land Bill, the Veto Bill, the One Man One Vote Bill, and five or six other Bills of less importence. He made no complaint of the length of the programme, because it was the common practice on both sides of the House to propose much more than they hoped in the end to carry. On the other hand the hon. Member for West Birmingham said the Government had raised one vital constitutional question in Home Rule, and a second vital constitutional question as to the position of the House of Lords, and urged the Government not to waste the time or patience of the country in trying to pass these Bills, but to bring in their Resolution. If the latter was a fair statement of the position, if they felt that the House of Commons had lost caste, he would submit respectfully that it was their business to redeem their character before the country. This consideration ought to be present before their minds: Was there a reasonable prospect of passing the Bills, or the majority of the Bills that were to be presented to them. If there were no such prospect they ought to follow the advice of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham, but if there was they ought not to do so. He contended that the Welsh Disestablishment Bill had not been sprung upon the country suddenly, it was definitely before the people at the last Election; in the north he knew that for many a long year it had been a *sine qua non* that a Liberal candidate should be in favour of it. It was supported by an overwhelming preponderance of public opinion in Wales, by the United Liberal Party, and by the main Irish Party on principle. He wanted the House for once to realise that it was not on political grounds that the Nonconformists in this country were for Disestablishment. It was for religious reasons that they wished to see the Bill passed, in order to free the Church from State control. He was certain that if the Bill was pressed forward by the Government it would command not merely a Government majority, but a far larger majority, including not only Liberals, but the Nationalist Members, and also many conscientious Liberal Unionist Members, who would be for ever discredited if they did not vote for the measure. Could any reasonable man suppose that a Bill sent up to the House of Lords backed by a great majority of that House and by the mass of the people outside would be rejected by their Lordships? He did not believe they would do so, for the Marquess of Salisbury and the Duke of Devonshire had never disputed that authority remained with the House of Commons when its Members were clearly supported by the great majority of the country. The House of Lords had never asserted the right to reject Bills sent up to them in face of a great majority of the Members of that House and of the people at large. It was only reasonable to suppose that when the Welsh Bill was sent up to their Lordships under such conditions they would pass it. On this ground, therefore, the Government were justified in pushing forward this measure. All he could say was that if the House of Lords refused to pass the Bill they would be acting contrary to constitutional principles. Again, with regard to the Irish Land Bill. Everybody admitted that it was an absolute necessity that such a Bill should be passed, and when it was brought forward it would be supported by a preponderant majority of the House of Commons and by the public generally. In that case also it would, therefore, be the constitutional duty of the House of Lords to pass it, he did not say in all its details, but in its main principles. He might apply the same remarks to the Local Veto Bill. Everyone knew the enormous evils that existed in connection with our licensing system, and consequently that Bill also would be supported by a large majority of the House of Commons and by all classes of the people. In such circumstances, on what constitutional principle could the House of Lords refuse to pass it? Therefore he contended that if the Government pushed forward these Bills earnestly and in a business-like way there would be a fair chance of their being passed into law. The Government, consequently, were justified in going on with the Session and in introducing all those measures. There was only one thing that would prevent the Bills, or any of them, passing—resort by any hon. Members to the new-fangled method of obstruction. He was not going to blame either Party, for both Parties had resorted to obstruction before now. But there was one very unfair feature sometimes displayed in this obstruction—that hon. Members, because they objected to one particular Bill as a bad Bill, should therefore obstruct other Bills which came before them, whether they were good or bad, simply in order to whittle away the time of the House. He ventured to say that if such obstruction was displayed in regard to any of the great measures to which he had referred, the Government ought, if they were really earnest in the work, to meet that obstruction with the firmest and most dogged determination to carry them. If necessary, they were prepared to sit all this year, and part of next, in order that they might send these Bills to the House of Lords. It was because he held the opinion that that good work might be done, and that the character of Parliament might be retrieved, that he would oppose the Amendment. The second consideration which he would present to the House, as influencing his vote, applied rather to the Liberal Party than to the Opposition. It was this: Was there a reasonable chance that the Resolution as to the House of Lords, which was some time to be proposed, would be better, stronger, and more adequate if they had it a year come Easter, than if it was presented now? He did not think it would be any discredit to the Ministry if the Resolution did not exist at this moment, and he was clearly of opinion that if they had a little more time to think over it, the Resolution would be more satisfactory. He was extremely anxious that, when the Resolution did come before the House, it should be an adequate Resolution, but when he turned to the speeches that had been made, he could not satisfy himself that it would be. He understood that Lord Rosebery was utterly opposed to the Leeds Resolution. He was extremely thankful that that was so, for the Leeds Resolution was the most extraordinary proposal that ever came from an intelligent body of men. It would operate in this way: the House of Commons might pass a measure in June, and the Lords might reject it. Then it would be brought to the House of Commons again, and passed, and it would immediately become Law without any action of the House of Lords. That was the extraordinary proposal that the concentrated wisdom of the Liberal Party at Leeds proposed to the House and the Country. What self-respecting man, what able or ambitious man would remain in the House of Lords a single day under such conditions? The House of Lords would become a laughing stock and a sham, and the proposal of the Liberals in Council was, that they should settle a serious political and constitutional controversy by transforming one of the Houses of the Legislature into a sham. He was told that he ought to support this proposal because it secured the end at which he aimed—a single Chamber. But he did not like crooked ways of securing great ends; and he did not believe the public, who loved downrightness, would adopt that roundabout way of carrying this Reform. His view, as one who had studied the question, was, that it would result in this—either there would be one Chamber, the House of Commons, controlling the affairs of the country, subject to a referendum, or there would be a second elective Chamber, with substantial, if not co-equal, powers with the first Chamber. If that was the complexion to which the matter must ultimately come, he was extremely anxious that they should make no mistake at the present time. To ask them to pass a Resolution which would practically leave the House of Lords with all its powers, would be not to lead but to mislead the Liberal Party—to lead them, not to victory, but to defeat. He would make another observation, and that was, that, if the Liberal Leaders thought that any campaign would be effectual which did not involve the abolition of the hereditary principle, they would find themselves mistaken. Some Liberals did not realise the strength of feeling that there was in the country on this subject. He knew that when one got to London it was very difficult to believe that this was really a democratic country, but there were whole areas where it would be found that the objection which was felt to the House of Lords was an objection to the hereditary principle. The people with whom he was accustomed to associate were of opinion that the present state of things which permitted the hereditary principle to continue, which continued the Bishops in the House of Lords, which continued the representative Peers of Scotland, as representative of the Peers and not of the people of Scotland, was in itself an objection, and unless it were remedied no effective demonstration could be made against the House of Lords. His view at present was that this Resolution, if presented to-day, would be one which, so far from carrying with it the Liberal and Radical Party, would be very likely to break it up into fragments. He believed that the Government realised, and that every man realised, that a campaign against the House of Lords must be held, and, therefore, he gave his voice not for calling upon the Government to produce the Resolution now, but rather for carrying on the proper business of the Session.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): I think there is a general feeling in the House that, at all events, this Debate upon the third Vote of Want of Confidence in the Government has reached its limits. The real truth is, as I observed on Friday, and since Friday, that since the consummate speech of my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, which, I think, may be described as having torpedoed the Amendment, this ironclad Amendment has gone to the bottom; and I do not think that anything that has been done since has retrieved its position, and that we may say of it that "All the King's horses and all the King's men will never raise up that Amendment again." I observe that even the Leader of the Tory Party on Saturday night—Lord Salisbury—complained—I do not know whether it was due to the weather, but had he been in the House of Commons he would have thought it was due to something else—Lord Salisbury said that the Debate was deprived of all enthusiasm, and I think we may safely say that since the speech of my right hon. Friend there has been very little enthusiasm in the Debate. It has dragged slowly along, enlivened, indeed, with a flight of imagination on the part of the late Attorney General. The hon. and learned Gentleman imagined a remarkable interview which he said had taken place between my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Hackney and myself, and, I believe, the Prime Minister, and followed the example very common now-a-days of watching one gentleman to another man's house and then sitting down and writing a column of what had taken place. We know that is the habit of newspaper correspondents, but I can assure the House that, though I value very much the visits of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Hackney, I never advised him to write a magazine article. I never wrote magazine articles myself, and if a friend came to me and asked my advice I should give it him in most concise terms, and I should say, "don't." The hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Wight knows that my hon. and learned Friend is a great patent lawyer. He was the first to originate his own patent, and I have not the smallest intention of infringing his patent. Therefore I hope the hon. and learned Gentleman will be satisfied on that point. But there is another cause why this Debate has flagged a good deal, and for that the mover of the Amendment is responsible, because he told us at the beginning of his speech—

> "We do not expect to beat the Government, and it is not our object in this Amendment to make the Government appeal to the country."

Now that has a tendency to damp the Debate, because, when the chief hangman announces to the public that a reprieve has arrived at the last moment, and when he says that he himself does not desire to put an end to the existence of the condemned man, the interest in the ceremony is at an end. Well, Sir, it is a little difficult to make out exactly what is meant by this last Vote of Want of Confidence. One of the great points in the criticism of Gentlemen who have spoken in this Debate is that the time of Parliament is being wasted. Well, we have spent a lot of this time in the Debate on the Address, and I would ask leave for a few moments to examine into what has been done. First of all we had the first Vote of Want of Confidence in the Government. I will not go into the details of it. I will describe it as the Hampshire-cum-West Ham Amendment. Now, the Government were to be condemned in that Amendment because they did not occupy the time of Parliament with agricultural distress, the textile industries, and the unemployed. That was the first Amendment, and it failed. Then came the next Amendment. That I will shortly describe as a Unionist-cum-Parnellite Amendment, and the object of that Amendment was to declare that we were not to occupy ourselves with agricultural distress, the textile industries, or the unemployed, but were to devote the whole of our energies to nothing else but Home Rule and the dissolution of Parliament. If we are to dissolve upon that, what becomes of the textile industries, agricultural depression, and the unemployed? That Amendment failed still more than the previous Amendment. Then comes this third Amendment, which is inconsistent with both the previous ones. We are not to devote ourselves to agricultural distress, textile industries, or even to Home Rule; but we are to devote the whole of our attention, at once and immediately, to nothing else but the discussion of the position of the House of Lords. But the Mover of this Amendment says what we ought to occupy ourselves with is social questions, and not to raise the great Constitutional controversies; and so we have practically spent the first fortnight of the Session in the discussion of competitive and self-destructive propositions brought forward on the part of the Opposition. That is the way in which the time of the House is economised. I do not complain of this as a Member of the Government, but as a Member of Parliament I deplore such waste of public time. The right hon. Gentleman who moves the Amendment says we are a tottering Government. If we are a tottering Government, how kind and how benevolent are those who procure for us, in ten days, in the House of Commons, three votes of confidence! Nothing could tend more to the support of a tottering Government or to prop it up. With three votes of confidence you give them a start on setting out with their legislative programme. The right hon. Gentleman was good enough to saythat I am an oldish Parliamentary hand. I am sorry to say that chronologically he is correct, but in my salad days, when I was a young apprentice, I had almost learnt that the most indiscreet and blundering thing to do was to set up a Government at the beginning of a Session by a vote of confidence; and therefore I confess that I viewed the tactics of the Opposition with equal satisfaction and astonishment. There is something also which is a little remarkable about this campaign which has been waged against us since the beginning of the Session; and how have these votes of confidence been brought forward? First of all, under the semi-auspices of the Member for West Ham. That was the first attack. Then the Opposition march out into the Lobby, and are told by the Member for the City of Waterford; and then finally comes what is supposed to be the great attack in force. That hung fire for some time. We were told it was coming, but it was more than a week before we saw it. We were threatened with instant extinction, and you would suppose, as in the days of Sir Robert Peel, that the Leader of the Opposition would come forward with a condemnation of the Government. But no; this belated abortion with which we are dealing was brought into the world after its time. I do not know whether some controversy was going on as to by whom it was to be brought forward, but in the end the third vote of want of confidence is produced by one of the chief champions of Disestablishment. Why cannot you fight under your own colours? What has become of the old blue flag? There seems to be no true blue left, but there is a kind of mixture; I do not know what. There is, perhaps, the faded yellow of Birmingham, a little touch of green from Waterford, and a little spot of red from West Ham, and that is what the blue flag has come to. Is that the way to fight a great campaign on the part of a great historical Party? As an oldish Parliamentary hand, I confess I am sorry to see that the enemy hardly knows the moves upon the board. There is something a little strange even in the form of this last Amendment. It is very difficult to know exactly what it is pointed at. It is said it is not intended to defeat the Government, and it is not intended to bring about a Dissolution. But why is it not to bring about a Dissolution when you are so anxious for it? But what is the exact drift of the Amendment? Is it with a view of setting up the doctrine that a Government ought not to bring forward in the House of Commons any measure which it thinks may possibly and probably will not pass? Now, is that a doctrine which is accepted by the Opposition? I have two things to say upon that matter, and it seems to be the pith of this discussion. First of all, I absolutely deny that there is any such doctrine, or that any Government, or that any House of Commons, ought to allow itself to be influenced by any consideration in discussing any measure which it brings forward as to whether or not that measure will pass the House of Lords. That is a doctrine that has never been heard before. I should like to know what John Bright would have said upon such a doctrine. What foundation is there for such a doctrine? What would have happened to all the great measures of Liberal Reform if any Government had ever accepted a doctrine of that description? Mr. Pitt, when he came into power after that great election which gave him an overwhelming majority, brought forward the Reform Bill which was the father, the progenitor, of all subsequent Reform Bills; and he, in the flush of his triumph, and plenitude of his power, was refused leave to introduce that Bill by a majority of 74. He was a Prime Minister bringing forward a great Constitutional Reform—a Bill which was regarded as revolutionary in those days. Do you suppose that Mr. Pitt thought that that Bill was likely to pass the House of Lords? Why, it was not passed in the House of Commons! What would have become of Catholic Emancipation if this doctrine had been accepted? When that reform was initiated Protestant ascendency was intrenched in the House of Lords; and are we to be told that a Government was estopped from proposing such a measure as that because there was no immediate prospect of its passing into law? The same question applies to the measures for removing the disabilities of Nonconformists and of the Jews. When my right hon. Friend the Member for Midlothian introduced the Reform Bill of 1884, there was but little probability that it would pass the House of Lords; and are we to be told that a measure of that character was not to be introduced because there was a probability that it would not be passed by that House? If this doctrine is to be accepted, we must alter the forms of this House. When an hon. Member asks leave to introduce a Bill in this House he is asked by Mr. Speaker: "Who brings in the Bill?" and the names are given. But if this doctrine be accepted, Mr. Speaker must put an additional question—namely, "Have you got the leave of the House of Lords?" Yes; is there no respect left for the honour of the House of Commons? But I now come to the second head of this question, and ask—Is it true that the measures we have laid before Parliament have no prospect of passing into law? My hon. Friend who has just sat down, in his very able speech, has shown that, in his opinion, as in ours, there is a fair and reasonable chance that these Bills may pass. We have never held any other opinion, and I hold it more strongly to-day than I have held it before. Is Welsh Disestablishment beyond hope? The right hon. Gentleman the author of this Amendment said, that it would be bad taste on his part to inquire into the opinions and constitution of future Cabinets. But I want to know whether in the next Cabinet — the Unionist Cabinet—Disestablishment is to be an open question? We know that, in old days, the Catholic claims were an open question, and we know in what way open questions always end. The right hon. Gentleman declares that, even in his united Party, he stands alone in his attitude towards the Disestablishment question; but I doubt it. Why, we have heard the right hon. Member for Bodmin to-night, who reviewed the measures of the Government, and did not object to one of them; and I hope that, in respect of most of them, we shall have the advantage of his support. He knows better than I do whether the opinions of Cornwall are against Disestablishment, whether they are against the principle of Local Veto, whether they are against Irish Land Legislation. Well, we shall see. I am not without some hope. The right hon. Gentleman the Mover of this Amendment over and over again has assured the Welsh people that, if Home Rule were only out of the way, they will have Disestablishment at once. Well, he is going to vote Home Rule out of the way; and is he prepared with his allies to give Disestablishment to Wales?

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: I never said anything of the kind.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Then I have misread the speech of the right hon. Gentleman. I understood that he held out to the Welsh people that, if Home Rule were out of the way, there would be very little difficulty as to Disestablishment.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I think my right hon. Friend should read my speech more carefully. What I did say, on the only occasion to which I referred to the matter was, that, since Home Rule was introduced, the prospect of Disestablishment in Wales had been delayed. I believe that still, but I never said of my own motion that I could secure Disestablishment for the Welsh people.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I do not think there is much difference. What the right hon Gentleman practically said was that, if they had Home Rule out of the way, he would be on the side of Welsh Disestablishment. I think the Welsh people understood him in that sense. As to the Irish Land Bill, are the Government going to stand alone? Is the Member for South Tyrone going to vote for the Irish Land Bill?

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): I shall wait until I see it.

SIR W. HARCOURT: What is that?

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I shall tell you when I see it.

SIR W. HARCOURT: The reason I have arrived at the conclusion is that the hon. Member made a speech in Ulster in which he implored the people of that province to strengthen the hands of Mr. Morley.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: Allow me one word. It is quite true I made that speech, and I am going to stand by it; but we are not sure whether the Government is going to introduce the Evicted Tenants Bill into the Land Bill, and if that is done no Ulster Unionist would ever give his undertaking to support Mr. Morley or any one else on that subject.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I confess that my hopes were based on the speech of the hon. Member made in last October, in which he stated what I may call the ethics of the Unionist Party. I was very much interested, because he discussed the course he had taken on the last Budget, as well as his course on other measures during the Session. Here is what he said as to the Budget—

> "I will take one Bill as an illustration of what I mean—I refer to the Finance Bill, which was the great achievement of last Session. It occupied nearly the whole of the Session, and it was a Measure of great magnitude. Mr. Chamberlain hardly ever appeared in his place. Mr. Courtney, another prominent man in our ranks, voted steadily with the Government almost through the entire Session. It was a Measure the principles of which Liberals have been committed to for a quarter of a century. For 20 years I must have made speeches in favour of the equalisation of the Death Duties. I know I did in 1885, and it is almost impossible for a Liberal to argue in favour of a lower scale of assessment for land than for any other form of property. The Liberal Unionists were nearly all in a very tight corner."

Then the hon. Member said that he voted with "the Conservative wing of the Unionist Party." So that the Unionist Party has two wings. As to the Bills which are to be brought before the House the hon. Member said, "As a general principle I am not in favour of Established Churches." As a Liberal he declared he should Vote for the Disestablishment of the Welsh Church, and then he added—

> "but the Conservative Party is solid against Disestablishment, and many of my Liberal Unionist friends are also opposed to it. What ought I to do under these circumstances?"

The hon. Member continued—

> "Ulster owes absolutely nothing to Wales. The Principality has done its best to fasten upon us the most degrading form of servitude. I consider this to be a case where I ought not to assert my own personal views, which are more abstract than anything else, at the expense of allies and friends. I will not, indeed, vote against the principle of Welsh Disestablishment. I could not well do that, but I shall not vote for the Second Reading of the Government Bill, and in Committee, should the Bill get that length, I shall vote as the justice or injustice of each Amendment seems to require."

"That," he added, "is what I call the price of the alliance." Now, that disposes of Welsh Disestablishment. He will not vote for it, but he will not vote against it; and in Committee he will vote according to the justice of the case. Here is another matter, which is even more encouraging than Welsh Disestablishment. He says—

> "There are other issues which put the difficulties much more strongly. Suppose the Government, instead of bringing in a Welsh Church Bill, brought in a Liquor Traffic (Local Control) Bill, my duty in such a case would be clear. It is true that the English Conservative Party are against that Measure. Mr. Chamberlain, and I dare say most of the Liberal Unionists, would follow them in doing so. I should at least vote for the Second Reading; and this illustrates in the clearest manner the point I am driving at. Few people in Ulster care about the Welsh Church, whether it is disestablished or not. A great many—most of the best people in Ulster—do care for Temperance Reform. In that case I should vote against our allies. I should vote against my own Leader and most of my friends."

Well, now, that is most encouraging. The Local Veto Bill will have the support of the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell). But there are a good many Members besides who do not regard Temperance as a Party question. There are a good many Members, I believe, who are not supporters of the Government, who, in my belief, will use their best endeavours to arrive at a satisfactory solution of this question; and, therefore, when we are told that we are bringing forward a Local Veto Bill which we do not believe has any chance of passing, I entirely deny it. My hope is that this Parliament will not dissolve until it has made a serious and successful attempt to cope with this question. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's (Mr. G. J. Goschen) appealed to me and asked me whether in my early days there was anything like a Caucus and a Newcastle Programme, and he delivered a very able argument against the Caucus. But why does he address it to me? I was not the inventor of the Caucus. I was not the person who established the principle of laying down programmes. It is quite true that when I first came into Parliament that invention was unknown. But what, after all, is the Caucus, if you choose to call it so? It is only a method of endeavouring to ascertain what is the opinion of the bulk of the Party, and all Leaders of a Party must desire to know what are their opinions. Somebody said in the course of the Debate that in old days you only took one measure and stuck to it and did nothing else. Is that true? The first Parliament I entered, that of 1868, came in primarily to disestablish the Irish Church; but what did it do besides? It passed the Ballot Act, the Education Act, and the Irish Land Act, and all without the instrumentality of the Caucus, because those were measures the Party desired should pass into law. The right hon. Gentleman in moving this Amendment gave me credit for a clearness of declaration with reference to the attitude of the Liberal Party in regard to Home Rule. I should have been ashamed of myself if I had left that matter in any doubt. Sir, unfortunately, the right hon. Gentleman has abandoned the Liberal Party, but his memory cannot be so short that he does not know that among the immortal traditions of the Liberal Party the greatest is this—that when it once espouses a cause it never relinquishes it. On all those great questions to which I have referred already—the emancipation of slaves, Parliamentary reform, free trade, the removal of religious disabilities—all these were causes which had the adhesion of the Liberal Party; they never abandoned them, but clung to them until they had carried them to a successful issue. [An hon. MEMBER: "Free Trade?"] Yes; did the Liberal Party not carry Free Trade? The right hon. Member for Bodmin (Mr. Courtney) said that Free Trade was carried by the potato famine. No, Sir; it was not carried by the potato famine. It was carried, first of all, by a Liberal Government declaring itself in its favour with certain qualifications, and ultimately the determination of Sir Robert Peel to announce the immediate Repeal of the Corn Laws in consequence of letters written by Lord John Russell. Yes, Sir; the Liberal Party do not abandon the causes they have espoused. What cause have they ever abandoned? [An hon. MEMBER: "The Union."] Really, Sir, I did not know that the ignorance upon Irish questions was so great. The Union was not the act of the Liberal Party. But there is a Party which has abandoned almost all great causes.

There was the Party of Protestant Ascendency, and in a moment it threw it over, even in the House of Lords, because it feared what might follow. There was the cause of Protection. That was thrown over in a moment. People were taken by surprise when Sir Robert Peel came down and announced the Repeal of the Corn Laws. Yes; the Party which had defeated a £5 franchise in 1866 came forward next year and proposed it. The right hon. Member for Bodmin referred to the question of the Corn Laws, and said it was carried by Sir Robert Peel. Yes, Sir; it was. I do not know what is meant by that illustration. Did he mean that that was the future of Home Rule? I can almost hear the right hon. Gentleman getting up in his place and according merited honours to the unadorned eloquence of the hon. Member for Waterford City (Mr. J. E. Redmond). We all remember Sir Robert Peel, when he repealed the Corn Laws, said the honour did not belong to him but to the unadorned eloquence of Sir Richard Cobden. Stranger things may happen than that the future of Home Rule may be like the future of the Corn Laws. But, Sir, one of the great charges against us is that our varying policy prevents a square fight in the open. That is, the expression upon Home Rule. He said, "Let us have Home Rule, and nothing but Home Rule, before the country." Sir, there has never been a General Election at which you have not had many questions before the public. Men in public, as in private, life act from mixed motives, and you never can have any election which turns upon a single question. ["1886."] Yes, I will give you an authority to which you will pay some respect. The Mover of this Amendment, the right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain), has gone through the country preaching to his allies, and saying, "Do not stand on a negative policy. If you do you are sure to be beaten." That is the square fight in the open; that is a negative to Home Rule. The right hon. Gentleman, knowing that, has invented a confused issue—an unauthorised programme for the next election. You say you are to have a plain and simple issue; the right hon. Gentleman says—

> "I know perfectly well if we have a plain and simple issue on the negative to Home Rule we shall be defeated";

therefore, he selects a collective issue, and turns it into an unauthorised programme, which is to confuse and prevent there being a square fight in the open upon Home Rule. The right hon. Gentleman was good enough to tell us that we have forgotten how to govern and not learnt how to resign. Now, what does he mean by saying we have forgotten how to govern? Does that apply to us in our administrative capacity? What is the charge you have brought against us in our administrative capacity? Is it against the conduct of foreign affairs? The right hon. Gentleman said the other night he considered that out of the arena of Party questions. Is it the government of Ireland that he charges us with? When has Ireland been more peaceful or in a condition of which England had less cause to be ashamed than at the present moment? As to domestic policy, are you prepared to affirm that the Home Office has been less well conducted under my right hon. Friend than it was in former times? As to Local Government in this country, you yourselves claim to have a share in the measure that was brought forward with such ability by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for India. As to Education, I know you do not approve of everything we have done. Yes; but you cannot say we have forgotten how to govern. As to Finance, I must not speak, but if you choose to challenge us upon that issue either here or in the country, we are ready to meet you. Well, so much for the statement that we have forgotten how to govern. Then you say we have not learnt how to resign. No, Sir, because the House of Commons has not taught us. Upon what constitutional principle do you demand that a Government in a majority should resign? Why, it is not a very logical proposition that a Government that has a majority should resign in favour of a Party that has got no majority, which is in a minority. When has a Government which was in a majority resigned? I gave you one great example just now in the case of Mr. Pitt, when the Prime Minister, upon his own Reform Bill, was beaten by a majority of 74. He did not resign. That was rather a remarkable circumstance. Sir Robert Peel, in 1835, was beaten over and over again and he did not resign. But I will come to the cases of a majority. The Second Reading of the great Reform Bill of 1831 was carried by a majority of one. Was the Government that had a majority of one upon a question like the first Reform Bill bound to resign? If it had done so it would have betrayed its duty to its Party. No, Sir, they did not resign until they were beaten afterwards.—[Mr. BALFOUR: They dissolved.]—They did not dissolve upon that majority; they never dissolved until they were beaten in the House of Commons. They were beaten twice before they dissolved. The Motion upon which they were beaten was that of General Gascoigne, who, if I am not mistaken, was some relative of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition, and, on that account, he may have some cause to remember the circumstance. When the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) brought in his Reform Bill his majority upon an Amendment of Lord Grosvenor's was five, and he did not resign or dissolve until afterwards, when he was beaten in the House of Commons. Now, will you exactly fix on what majority a Government ought to resign? I will give you a figure. When the great Government of Lord Palmerston came in and the Motion of Want of Confidence was moved by Lord Hartington in this House, the majority by which the Tory Party was defeated and upon which the Liberal Government was founded was 13. The Government of Lord Melbourne was frequently defeated in the House of Commons. We have not been defeated in the House of Commons, and I should like to ask upon what ground could a Government justify itself to its Party or the country if, while it possessed a majority in the House of Commons, it resigned? Have we been defeated on our legislative measures? ["Yes.] On which of them? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. J. Chamberlain), has borne testimony to the fact that never has any Government in so short a time passed so many important measures. You say indeed that our majority has been reduced. Yes, but what is the principal element in that reduction? You know perfectly well that the reduction in our majority is due to the fact that the hon. Member for Waterford and his Friends consistently support you in the Lobby. Well, then I say further that there is not the smallest foundation for saying that we have forgotten how to govern. We have adopted certain principles, and we are endeavouring to carry those principles into effect. You cannot say that in regard to our legislative measures up to this time we have lost the confidence of the House of Commons; and under those circumstances we feel ourselves absolutely bound and compelled, in honour and in duty, until we are condemned by the House of Commons, to carry out the policy which we were sent here to give effect to; and we will continue to do it until we are condemned by this House. I regret I have occupied the time of the House so long; and I hope when we have decided upon this, the third Vote of Want of Confidence, we may be allowed then to proceed with the business of the Nation.

*MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has entertained us with his eloquence for something very little under an hour; but he has not been able during that time to touch on the Amendment. He has given us a good deal of excellent information and criticism upon a very large variety of subjects; but the Amendment and the arguments which have been advanced from time to time by various speakers in its favour have been boycotted absolutely from the beginning of his speech to its end. He has given us a good deal of English history—some of it good, some of it extremely bad. He has told us, for example, that the Party to which he belongs never abandoned a cause it once took up. The right hon. Gentleman is a distinguished Member of that Party. Can he pretend that he has not abandoned a cause he has once taken up? I have no particular love—in fact, I think I may say I have abstained from troubling the House with quotations from ancient speeches of those to whom I am opposed; but if it were worth while to deal with that kind of Parliamentary ware I could produce categorical speeches from the right hon. Gentleman against, I believe, every single one of the important measures of the Government. I could quote from him sentences to show that he would never associate himself with the disestablishment of the Church. I could quote from him sentences to show that he would never associate himself with the plunder of the publicans, or with any measure injuriously affecting their interests. And, though I do not pledge myself to the statement, I could find in many speeches some quotation relevant to the House of Lords. I am sure the right hon. Gentleman associated himself too closely with the aristocratic traditions of English history for one moment to doubt that, if necessary, I could bring up quotations on that subject which would show that, whatever the Liberal Party may do, the most eminent Member of that Party is perfectly accustomed to change his opinion on all the subjects it now advocates. Then the right hon. Gentleman went on to make a parallel—we have been accustomed to parallels, by the way, in the course of this Debate—between the political events that occurred between 1839 and 1846, and those that are expected to occur in the immediate future. But of all the strange parallels that have been given to us in the course of the last two days, surely the strangest of all is the parallel between Mr. Cobden and the hon. Member for Waterford. Sir, the right hon. Gentleman, amongst other subjects of attack, quite irrelevant, I may say, to the matter under Debate, criticised the Tory Party for following the hon. Member for Waterford into the Lobby. But, so far as I am concerned, knowing now that in the opinion of the Leader of the House the hon. Member for Waterford is the closest modern analogue to Mr. Cobden, if there had been any shame on my part—and I do not say there was—for the part I took in supporting the Motion of the hon. Member it would be entirely dissipated by the statement of the Leader of the House. I do not intend to stop, for time is short, to discuss with the right hon. Gentleman another subject which he dragged into this Debate—namely, the constitution of the next Cabinet. I do not know whether it is imminent or whether it is not. At all events, whatever interest that subject may possess—I do not know whether interest is centred in it or not—but whatever interest it may have, I would submit that it is far outside the limits of the Amendment now under discussion. Well, Sir, there is another matter which the right hon. Gentleman brought in at very great length. For some time he seemed at a loss how to fill up the time allotted to him by the ordinary practice of the House, and he therefore gave us very long extracts from the speeches of my hon. Friend the Member for South Tyrone, speeches in no wise directed to the question under discussion—speeches about the Land Bill, speeches about the Liquor Bill, speeches about various other subjects, which may some day be under discussion, but which are not under discussion at the present moment. The right hon. Gentleman says—

> "How monstrous that a Statesman of the ability of the hon. Member for South Tyrone should, on certain subjects, bow his own opinion to the general feeling of the Party to which he belongs!"

The Leader of the House says "How monstrous!" but he cannot have listened to a most interesting and amusing speech we had from the hon. Member for Northampton. Then we saw, indeed, what it was to bow your opinion to the feelings of the majority of your Party. But I am certain that my hon. Friend the Member for South Tyrone, in the utmost flights of his eloquence, never was guilty of using unparliamentary language towards himself, and that he never described himself as a man "bowed under the Party yoke, obediently, stupidly, and patiently obeying the goad and lash of the Party Whip." Of all men in this House, the present Leader of the House is the last person who ought to reproach those who follow him humbly into the Lobby, openly and avowedly differing from him in speech, in order to keep him in the Office which he so admirably adorns. There is only one other point which I need allude to, before I come to the Amendment under discussion; and that is, the conduct of the Party to which I have the honour to belong in voting with the hon. Member for Waterford in an Amendment which he moved the other day. This has profoundly stirred the indignation of the right hon. Gentlemen who sit on the Treasury Bench. There has not been one of them who spoke on the Amendment, who has been able to restrain the expression of his indignation at the course which we ventured to pursue last Thursday. I cannot understand this new code of Parliamentary ethics. The Home Secretary, with a sneer which was very obvious, though concealed in the utmost graces of language, described us as "the new comrades of the hon. Member for Waterford." Ever since I have been in this House there has been one maxim which has never been contested, as far as I know, by any Gentleman in any quarter of the House, and that is that you are at liberty—I put it no higher than that—to vote for a thing in which you believe whoever may be the Statesman who proposes it. I think that the Government are most ungrateful in reproaching us on this side of the House for having exercised that liberty. It is true that I voted with the hon. Member for Waterford because I agreed with him, and when he next proposes a motion with which I agree I shall vote with him again. But the measure which I mete out to the hon. Member for Waterford I constantly mete out to the right hon. Gentlemen who sit on the Treasury Bench. How often have we rescued them from the Radical zeal of their own followers? When the right hon. Gentleman says that he has a right, and even a duty, to stay in Office until he is turned out by the House of Commons, I do not contest his position. But the right hon. Gentleman would have been turned out over and over again but for his "new comrades." I must say that I think it is a dangerous augury for the continuance of the present Government that they should let every gentleman on this side of the House understand that if he votes for the Government, even when he agrees with them, he must be counted in some sense as their supporter and comrade. I can only hope that the principle will not be taken to heart by hon. Gentlemen behind me. There is one more point. The right hon. Gentleman was good enough to criticise not only English history, the past of the Tory Party, the future of the next Cabinet, and other interesting and similar subjects, but also to comment on the tactics which the Opposition have pursued since the House met. He said:—

> "Was ever such folly known as giving the Government the strength which is obtained from an unsuccessful Vote of Censure?"

I do not know how high the Government put that advantage. I do not know what they think it adds to their strength. I confess, for my own part, I should have thought that a Debate like that we have had to-night, and a Division like that we had the other night would not and strength even to the strongest Government, and that a Government which is evidently, with respect to the opinion of its followers, cut and rent from one end to the other by divisions so profound as those which divide Gentlemen opposite, certainly was not likely to be strengthened by a majority of 12, or by the speech which I heard from the right hon. Member for the Forest of Dean. That brings me to an observation which the right hon. Gentleman made at the beginning of his speech. He said that the whole of the interest of this Debate had concluded with the eloquent speech of the Home Secretary on Friday. I admit, and everybody who heard that speech will admit, that the Parliamentary display of the Mover of the Amendment and of the Home Secretary, who answered him, on Friday night were worthy of the best times of the House of Commous, and were as brilliant an exhibition of Parliamentary dexterity, Parliamentary wit, and Parliamentary dialectic as we are ever likely to hear. Though there have been no speeches to compare with those two in eloquence, I am not sure that the speech of the right hon. Member for the Forest of Dean did not exceed them in interest and in importance. What did the right hon. Gentleman tell us? He told us to-night—and his speech was not referred to by the Leader of the House—that he and those who agree with him, the militant Radical in and out of the House, drew a wide distinction between the right hon. Gentleman and two or three of his colleagues and those Members of the Government who sit in the House of Lords. He told the House that he for his part, while anxious to proceed to the question of the House of Lords, gave us to understand that if ever it was brought up in this House, he and the Members of his Party will be found supporting the view of the position of the House of Lords and of the Constitution of this country which the Prime Minister has declared in words which he can never explain away, never mitigate, alter, or diminish, that he is unalterably opposed to. What are we to say of a Party which governs this country by a majority of 12—I do not quarrel about the figures—or, say, of 20, whose majority apparently on the question of the revolution which they have gratuitously endeavoured to bring about is divided, not in any of the details, not in any mere superficial incident, but is vitally, fundamentally, and essentially cut into two irreconcileable Parties? Such a Government has no title to dictate legislation to this House, no title to the confidence of the country. The right hon. Gentleman has told us that when we state that the Bills which the Government have announced they are to bring forward are not likely to pass we are in error, that the Bills really had an excellent prospect of being passed into law. I am not going to discuss the prospect of those Bills. I can only say that every statement made by responsible Ministers throughout the country during the whole Recess, absolutely contradicts that position. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has not said so, because he has said nothing. It is easy to be discreet when you are absolutely silent; but the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary have said so. I admit that an explanation has been given by the Minister for War. The right hon. Gentleman had before him those speeches, and some of his own among others, and what did he tell us? The Opposition have been "grubbing" about among the speeches delivered by Ministers in the autumn, and they have discovered, no doubt, a certain number of statements which appear to point in this direction; and the right hon. Gentleman added "Pity the sorrows of a Cabinet Minister." He must make speeches; when he makes speeches they must be reported; and in making those speeches it is an unfortunate necessity to make your sentences, if possible, grammatical and find a striking conclusion to your paragraph. I gather from him that all these amazing professions about the possibility of getting legislation through Parliament this Session were in the nature of finding grammatical conclusions to sentences and forcible terminations to perorations. I have too great respect for the Gentlemen who sit on the Treasury Bench and for the Prime Minister to suppose, although accidents may happen to them and to all of us, that they should be victims to the constant misfortune of always being obliged to end most effective sentences by recourse to the statement of the fact that the legislation they were going to propose was destined to come to an inglorious termination. That defence of the Government, I venture to say, must be abandoned. I prefer the defence of the Home Secretary, who, having himself been the author of this unfortunate sentence and these too brilliant paragraphs, naturally did not wish to commit himself to the grammatical weaknesses with which he was charged by his colleagues. What was the Home Secretary's defence? He admitted, as I understand, that these Bills would never become law; but then, said he, think of the advantages of full discussion in this House; think of the immense benefit to Parliament and to the country of really threshing out these questions. Sir, when did the Government become converts to the doctrine of threshing out? They have been in Office two Sessions. The first two Sessions were intended, I suppose, to be practical Sessions, and then we had the gag applied. This Session is not to be practical, but it is to be one for discussion. I hope the Home Secretary will maintain this new-born zeal for Parliamentary debate, and that it will not be brought to unkindly conclusion by means with which we have been familiar during the last 18 months. The Home Secretary seems to think that the Bills of the Government will gain by closer acquaintanceship, and he has all the partiality of a parent for the first Bill which is to come before us. He cannot believe that we can know more of the Welsh Disestablishment Bill without getting to like it. To see it is to love it, and to cavil over its details in Committee is apparently for Parliament and the country to be convinced of its transcendant value. Still, making full allowance for the partiality of the right hon. Gentleman, I must say that experience does not bear out his anticipations. As far as I have any knowledge of these matters, I should say that a Bill is never so popular as when it is explained on public platforms, and never so unpopular as when it has run the gauntlet of discussion in this House. If I may offer a word of advice to the right hon. Gentleman, who does not expect to pass the Bill this Session, though he does expect to pass it after five or six years' agitation, as the Repeal of the Corn Laws was passed, I would say he will have a much better chance of passing it in five or six years if he does not require us too closely to scan its beauties on the present occasion. But I must allow I am a believer in the virtues of discussion if fairly conducted. If it is not a discussion on the merits of the Bill, not a discussion intended to have a practical issue, not a discussion anybody takes seriously, feeling personal responsibility for its results, then I say the House of Commons falls to the level, not only of a debating society, but far below it. We sink into a body of electioneering gentlemen who know what they say and hope for can have no permanent effect on the Statute Book, but may have an effect upon their seats. Anything more utterly demoralising to the House of Commons than that condition of things I cannot easily imagine. The Government have contrived, under the flood of an attack made upon the Opposition, to conceal partly from their own audience and partly from the country the real *gravamen* of the charge we make against them. What we say is that in the autumn of last year the Prime Minister, speaking on behalf of the Cabinet of which he is the authoritative mouthpiece, announced a Revolution. That announcement having fallen absolutely flat, he and his colleagues have ever since been trying to minimise it and explain it away. They came forward like an ale-house bully. They thought they had some defenceless victim, but they find the victim is stronger than they imagined, and they have put off to an indefinite future the quarrel which they were the first to provoke. You cannot put a Revolution into lavender and under lock and key in this way. You cannot announce to the country that you are going to do wonderful things, compared with which the Reform Bills of 1832 and 1867 and the whole history of our legislation for 200 years sink into insignificance, and then say you don't mean much, and that there is this question and that before even you will deign to discuss this wonderful Resolution which is only to be carried through by the stern resolution of a coatless and waistcoatless Party. What I complain of, and every man who values the dignity of this House complains of, is the outrage to which we, the representatives of the people, are made the victims by this procedure. We are asked to go through unreal debate and sham discussions to please the Government, to make ourselves the parties of wire-pullers who may or may not be dexterous, but who certainly do not represent the hands to which we desire to commit the destinies of this country, and I do not believe that in the whole of that Parliamentary history over which the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House has so glibly run in his speech this evening you will find a case in which a Government has deliberately come down to this House and said to it, "We have a Revolution in store for you which is to be embodied in a Resolution, of which," as the Minister for War said, "we will not tell you the smallest fragment"— because I believe they have not an idea as to what it shall be—"we have a Revolution in store for you, to be embodied in terms not yet decided, to carry out a policy on which we are absolutely divided; but we mean to put it off for one month, two months, three months, so long as it suits us, because, on the whole, we are of opinion that, while there is much to lose by flaunting this revolutionary flag prematurely in the eyes of the people, something may possibly be gained by discussions on subsidiary measures," in the meanwhile. Sir, the House of Commons ought not to make itself a party to any such electioneering transaction as that, and it is because I think myself bound to disassociate myself, and, so far as I can, my friends, from any manœuvres so utterly discreditable to the ancient honour and glory of this House that I, without hesitation, vote for the Amendment of my right hon. Friend.

Question put.

The House divided.—Ayes, 283; Noes, 297.—(Division List, No. 6.)

Main Question again proposed.

Debate arising,

Sir W. HARCOURT rose in his place, and claimed to move—"That the Question be now put."

Question put—
"That the Question be now put."

The House divided.—Ayes, 279; Noes, 271.—(Division List, No. 7.)

Main Question put accordingly, and agreed to.

Resolved,—That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, as followeth:

> "Most Gracious Sovereign, — We, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled, beg leave to thank Your Majesty for the Most Gracious Speech which Your Majesty has addressed to both Houses of Parliament."

To be presented by Privy Councillors.

TRUSTS ADMINISTRATION.

Ordered,—That the Select Committee be re-appointed to inquire into the liabilities to which persons are exposed under the present law as to the Administration of Trusts, and whether any further legislative provision might be made for securing adequate Administration of Trusts without the necessity of subjecting private trustees and executors to the risks which they now run.

Mr. A. J. Balfour.

The Committee was accordingly nominated of:—Mr. Butcher, Dr. Farquharson, Mr. Heneage, Mr. Kimber, Sir George Osborne Morgan, Mr. Arthur O'Connor, Sir Charles Pearson, Sir Henry Roscoe, Mr. Attorney General, Colonel Howard Vincent, and Mr. Warmington.

Ordered—That the Committee have power to send for Persons, Papers, and Records.

Ordered,—That Five be the quorum —*(Colonel Howard Vincent.)*

MOTIONS.

HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE (LANCASHIRE SITTINGS) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Holland, Bill to make better provision for Sittings of the High Court of Justice in the County of Lancaster.

Bill presented, and read the first time; to be printed a second time upon Wednesday, 27th of February, and to be printed. [Bill 118.]

SEA FISHERMEN'S VOTING (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Crombie, Bill to facilitate the voting of Sea Fishermen in Parliamentary Elections in Scotland.

Bill presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Thursday, 7th of March, and to be printed. [Bill 119.]

CONVENTION OF ROYAL BURGHS (SCOTLAND) ACT (1879) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Parker Smith, Bill to amend the Convention of Royal Burghs (Scotland) Act, (1879).

Bill presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 120.]

JURORS IRELAND (COUNTY CORK) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Maurice Healy, Bill to amend the Law relating to Jurors in Ireland so far as relates to the County of Cork.

Bill presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 2nd of April, and to be printed. [Bill 121.]

WOMEN'S PARLIAMENTARY AND LOCAL FRANCHISE BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Walter M'Laren, Bill to extend the Parliamentary and certain Local Franchises to Women.

Bill presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 24th of April, and to be printed. [Bill 122.]

House adjourned at Ten Minutes before One of the Clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, 19th February 1895.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1894, AMENDMENT BILL.

Bill passed through Committee without Amendment; to be read 3ª 28th February.

THE OPIUM COMMISSION.

VISCOUNT CROSS called attention to the great delay which had taken place in presenting the Report of the Opium Commission. He reminded their Lordships that in 1893 a Commission was issued to inquire into the whole question of the Opium Trade, the revenue received in respect of it, and the monopoly of the Indian Government in connexion with the commodity. The Commission originated in a vote passed in the other House. The question was one that affected most seriously the whole of India, whether viewed from a financial or moral standpoint. It was, therefore, a subject in which everybody concerned in the welfare of India must feel the deepest possible interest. A long time had now elapsed since the appointment of the Commission. The Commissioners had taken voluminous evidence in India, and everybody was very anxious last Session that the Report should be published before the Session ended. The delay in presenting the Report was referred to in both Houses in August, and the opinion was then confidently expressed that the Report would be issued in November. Three months had now elapsed since the time indicated, and the Report had not yet been issued. they knew that the Chairman of the Commission (Lord Brassey) had accepted an appointment in one of the Colonies. He congratulated the Colony upon that appointment, as well as the noble Lord himself; but he was very anxious that the Report should be issued before the noble Lord left this country to undertake the new duties which would no doubt engross his attention. It was stated in the other House last Session that the Indian revenues were to bear half the charges incident to the Inquiry that had been held. That seemed to him a monstrous burden to throw upon the revenues of India. He had intended to ask a question upon this point also, but he understood that it was the wish of the Secretary of the State for India that he should not do so now, and he would therefore postpone the question for a week or ten days.

LORD REAY contended that, considering all the circumstances, the extent of the Inquiry, the fact that it had to be conducted in India, and that the Members were not all in this country during the later stages of the work, the time taken by the Commission before issuing the Report could not be considered excessive. It was certainly not excessive when compared with the time taken by the Commission on Vaccination, to which allusion was made yesterday in their Lordships' House. He thought he could assure the noble Viscount that the Report of the Opium Commission would be laid upon the Table of the House very soon. The English Members had passed the Report with the exception of a summary of conclusions to be put forward at the next meeting by his noble Friend the Chairman, who, both in India and in England, had used his influence in order to expedite the issue of the Report. To-morrow and Thursday next the Commission would meet for the final verbal Amendment and the rearrangement in some cases of the three or four sections passed last week, and for the consideration of a valuable memorandum on the original draft contributed by Mr. Haridas Veharidas, one of the Indian Members, which was received only yesterday morning. The greater part of the Report thus passed was sent to the Indian Members a fortnight ago, and the rest would go by next mail. They had been requested to telegraph their assent if they agreed to the whole, and to send memoranda on the points respecting which they wished to qualify the views and conclusions of their colleagues. Mr. Haridas's memorandum had already been in great measure anticipated during the recent Sittings, but no communication had been received from the Maharajah of Darbhanga. In case of the receipt of a memorandum from the latter qualifying the acceptance of the Report, the Commission would meet once more to consider his suggestions before ordering the Report to be submitted. He thought he could safely say that the Report would be issued before Easter.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE had no doubt that most of their Lordships would share the feeling of the noble Viscount that it was unfortunate that so long a time should have intervened between the taking of the evidence in India and the final expression of the views of the Commissioners. He hoped the Chairman of the Commission would concur in his opinion that whatever might have been the cause of the delay the Government of India could not be charged with any responsibility for it. He was glad to have that opportunity of bearing witness to the earnestness shown by the officials of the Indian Government throughout the country in facilitating the work of the Commission. The Under-Secretary for India was perfectly right when he said that in this case there were special circumstances making some delay inevitable. He supposed that this was a solitary instance of a Royal Commission having some members domiciled in this country and others living in different parts of India. Those of their Lordships who knew by experience how difficult was the task of reconciling opposing views on Commissions and Committees could picture to themselves the embarrassment that must have been occasioned to the members of this Commission when the time came for an interchange of views between the London and the Indian sections. There was another point that ought to be taken into consideration. It was that the Commissioners were apparently obliged to compress within the limits of a single cold season an extremely difficult and detailed Inquiry. The result was that the evidence had to be taken rather hurriedly. The Commission was obliged occasionally to divide into sections, and witnesses had to be summoned from different parts of the country. That the Report might be expected at a very early date gave him great satisfaction. It was awaited with the utmost interest in India, because this was a subject that concerned not only the Finances of India, but also the private lives and domestic habits of the people of that country. Upon the question of expenditure the general feeling in India among natives and Europeans, official and unofficial, could, he believed, be expressed in the following words:—

> "We did not want this Inquiry, and if you wanted it you ought to pay for it yourselves."

That was the view entertained from one end of the country to the other. He would ask his noble Friend (Lord Reay) to consider whether this was not a case in which the costs of the trial might very fairly follow the verdict. If the Commissioners should report that the abuse of the Opium drug was very much less than had been supposed; if they should report that the people of India were not nearly so chargeable with intemperance in the use of narcotics as our own people here were chargeable with intemperance in the matter of stimulants; if they should report that the growth and cultivation of Opium in India did not affect the consumption of Opium in China much more than the growth of a choice Bordeaux vintage affects intemperance in the United Kingdom; if they should report that the Government of India from time to time had done its best to check the immoderate use of the drug and to prevent any artificial stimulus being given to its consumption; if they should report that any further interference might raise not only financial, but social and political questions of the gravest importance; if they should report to that effect,—then he ventured to say that Lord Elgin's Government would be amply justified in saying to the Government of Her Majesty: This Inquiry was forced upon us under pressure from an influential section in your political community at home; you have failed to prove your case against us; you have unsettled the minds of the people of this country; do not inflict upon us the further injustice of making us pay for an investigation which we regard as both mischievous and superfluous.

*LORD BRASSEY wished to explain how it was practically impossible for the Commission to present their Report in time for consideration in the last Session of Parliament. After having taken evidence in London in September, they met for the taking of evidence in Calcutta on November 18, 1893. Between November 18 and the departure of the Commission from India on its return to this country, with the exception of some few days at Christmas, the Commission sat every working day, often six and even seven hours a day, and sometimes sitting in two sections. The result of that constant sitting was that the printers could not possibly keep pace with the Commission. He desired to say that at Calcutta the work of the Government printing press was admirably done, but when they were a distance from Calcutta, in Punjab or Burma, it was obviously impossible that the Government printers should follow the work satisfactorily. It was therefore decided to bring the shorthand-writers' notes to England and to print in this country. The printing of the evidence taken in India and at Burma was not completed before the month of June. They had found it necessary to issue interrogatories through the Foreign Office to the Consuls in China and to other persons whose information they were desirous to obtain with reference to the Opium question in China. The replies from China were not printed and in the hands of Members till July. It was therefore quite impossible that the Report could have been considered in time for presentation to this and the other House of Parliament in the last Session of Parliament. They could have presented a short Report by meeting in Bombay at the conclusion of their journey through India. They did hold consultations in Bombay, and did decide on Resolutions which practically formed the recommendations of the Commission; but it would have been most unsatisfactory to have presented a final Report in Bombay without an opportunity of considering the evidence, which they had much trouble to take and which involved considerable expenditure of public money. They had their report ready for consideration in the early part of November, and he could truly say that from that time to the present the attention of the Commission had been bestowed with the utmost assiduity upon the subject, which was by no means a simple one. He could only say that the pledge given by Mr. Fowler in the other House of Parliament, to the effect that the Report would be in the hands of Parliament before Easter, would be faithfully kept.

VISCOUNT CROSS thanked the noble Lord for the immense trouble he had taken as Chairman of the Commission and said he was happy to hear that before Easter the Report would be presented, because it was anxiously looked forward to.

SANITARY REGISTRATION BILL [H.L.].

Bill for the sanitary registration of dwelling-houses, schools, colleges, hospitals, asylums, workhouses, factories, workshops, hotels, lodging-houses, and other buildings within the United Kingdom. Presented (the Marquess of Ailesbury); read 1ª, and to be printed. [No. 18.]

House adjourned at Five minutes before Five o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 19th February 1895.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. J. W. MELLOR) took the Chair at Ten minutes past Three of the clock.

THE CRANBROOK DISTRICT WATER BILL.

Bill read 2°.

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL (GENERAL POWERS) BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

SIR H. JAMES (Bury, Lancashire), said, he should be sorry to oppose a Bill promoted by the London County Council, but he felt bound to call attention to some provisions of the Bill, and particularly to Clause 41.

MR. J. STUART (Shoreditch), having charge of the Bill, wished to explain that Clauses 41 and 42 were introduced into the Bill of last year, and they were struck out at the wish of the Home Office. After reconsideration, they had been re-introduced this year, in order that there might be a further opportunity of discussing them. They had again been before the Home Secretary, who said that he would oppose Clause 41, but not Clause 42, and therefore Clause 41 would be withdrawn.

SIR H. JAMES said, he did not quite appreciate at once what the result of that might be, but the effect of Clauses 41, 42, 43, and 44, was to give to the London County Council the power of altering the polling districts for the Parliamentary Elections in the Metropolis. This was a most serious power, the exercise of which might be used to affect the representation of the Metropolis in this House. If an objector wished to place his objection before the Committee, and to propose any Amendment of the Clauses, he could only do it by appearing before the Committee by Counsel. Therefore, he asked the House to consider whether a power so important, if it were to be conferred on the County Council, should not be given by public Bill, and not by private Bill, so that it might be discussed in that House like any other change in public law. He did not wish to appear to be opposing the general policy of the London County Council, but he objected to private Bills being introduced in this way. Some pledge should be given that the Clauses he had named would be withdrawn, even if the rest of the Bill passed. In the absence of that pledge, he hoped the House would not allow the Bill to proceed.

MR. J. CALDWELL (Mid Lanark): On a point of Order, may I ask whether it is competent in a private Bill to interfere in any way with a franchise established under a public Bill, or to alter the boundaries of that franchise? I think it has been held not to be so.

*MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is a question for the House, and after the recent ruling of the Speaker, I cannot say that this is a question of order.

MR. R. G. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.) said, he wished to endorse the remarks of the right hon. Member for Bury. It was a peculiar fact that these Bills were introduced at this early period of the Session. As a rule London County Council Bills had been introduced later in the Session, when hon. Members had had an opportunity of carefully examining them. Why was this Bill introduced so early in the Session? The Bill would have passed the Second Reading on the previous day if an hon. Member had not interposed and objected. On Saturday, when Members took up their Notice Papers, they found that the matter was to be decided on Monday. None of the sixty-two Members who represented London had had an opportunity of considering these various Bills. The House should remember that these Bills had been drafted by a Parliamentary Committee of the present London County Council. An important Election was pending, in which the policy of the Council would be discussed, and this being the case, he thought it would be wiser to postpone the further consideration of the Bill until after the Election, when they knew the judgment of London with regard to the policy of the Council. If the House found that the views of the majority of the present Council were the views of London, undoubtedly opposition to the Bill would be diminished.

*SIR JULIAN GOLDSMID (St. Pancras, S.) said, that when he first had the honour of a seat in that House he understood that private Bills referred exclusively to private matters. But from time to time he had noticed a great tendency to alter public Acts by means of private Bills. It was a serious matter, because the result would naturally be that they would not know what the law was. He had not had time carefully to examine these London County Council Bills, but he was convinced that the principle of the particular Clauses, to which objection had been taken, was a bad one, because they altered a public Act. It was desirable that the House should lay down a stringent rule for the future, that it would not allow public Acts of Parliament to be altered by private Acts. If any safeguard were needed in a public Act it should be proposed and discussed in Committee.

*MR. J. F. MOULTON (Hackney, S.) moved the Adjournment of the Debate so that the Clauses objected to might be looked into. The County Council only sought power to do in the case of the few districts in which Petty Sessions are the authority that which in the case of districts under the control of Quarter Sessions they can do in the same circumstances.

SIR J. BLUNDELL MAPLE (Camberwell, Dulwich) suggested, that the further consideration of the Bill should be postponed for a month. The County Council Elections would shortly take place. These Bills were the subject of platform speeches. The Elections were on Saturday week, and a postponement for a month would enable the new Council to examine these Bills, and see whether they approved of the policy of those who represented the Council in that House.

MR. J. POWELL WILLIAMS (Birmingham, S.) reminded the House that certain Government Departments had the right to pass Provisional Orders. It had always been understood that Provisional Orders could only deal with local private Acts, and not interfere with public general Acts. He submitted that no private Bill should be allowed to interfere with a public Act of Parliament.

SIR H. JAMES remarked that there should be give and take in these matters, and to save the trouble of dividing the House he would accept the Motion for Adjournment.

Debate adjourned until 26th February.

TOWER BRIDGE (SOUTHERN APPROACH) BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. H. KIMBER (Wandsworth) said, he had no objection to the alteration proposed in this Bill. It could have been passed two or three years ago but for the action of certain enthusiastic individuals on the County Council, and the work contemplated would have been executed. London required it, and the labour of London might be usefully employed in executing it. But Spring Gardens had intimated that they did not intend to perform their duties in the execution of these great works unless Parliament would delegate to them the powers now reserved to Parliament to exercise—the powers of special taxation. The County Council had tacked to this Bill certain Betterment Clauses. They were of the same vicious character as those of the Bill of last year and Bills of previous Sessions. He need not detail the arbitrary proceedings or the drastic character of the Bill of last year. It was a code of special taxation. People's properties were to be taken from them, prospective improvements were to be valued seven years in advance, and people were to have the capital of their property taxed accordingly. Last year the Bill went to the House of Lords; and the County Council, assisted by the Government, using the forms of the House to prevent any real discussion on the merits of the Clauses, got the Bill passed. The Bill was sent to the House of Lords, who took the trouble to remove from it some of its injustices, and to make the principle of Betterment applicable in a more reasonable and just way. The House of Lords dealt in precisely the same way with the Manchester Corporation Bill, and the Manchester Corporation loyally accepted the Betterment Clauses as amended by the House of Lords. But the London County Council did not accept the Amendment of the House of Lords, and the consequence was, that this improvement so seriously needed by London was postponed again. They had now re-introduced the Betterment Clauses in precisely the same form as they did last year. He asked the Representatives of the County Council either to agree to an Instruction to the Committee which should deal with the Bill to consider whether or not the Betterment Clauses should be amended in the sense of the Lords' Amendments, or else to consent to the postponement of its further discussion until the same date as had been fixed for the previous Bill?

MR. J. STUART said, the Representatives of the County Council could not undertake to make any such conditions as had been proposed. The Bill passed through the House in the form in which they now brought it forward. It went to the House of Lords, and they very materially altered it in certain places, more particularly in regard to the Compulsory Purchase Clause. They had felt it was not possible to accept that Clause, and, at the time, the Session was too far advanced for any interchange of opinion upon the subject between the two Houses. He wished to remind the House that the Senior Member for Manchester, in accepting the Bill with a similiar Amendment made by the House of Lords, said that he did so with great regret on behalf of his municipality, because the Betterment Clause had been destroyed, but they accepted the Bill because its other portions were so important to them. He sincerely hoped that, before this Bill went into the Committee Stage, some way might be found of avoiding a repetition of the bootless action of last Session, and of securing some Clause which would be acceptable to all parties.

SIR J. BLUNDELL MAPLE moved that the Bill be read that day month, in order that these questions should be thoroughly talked over by the new Council, which would shortly come into power. It was a crying shame that thousands of workpeople in London should be kept waiting for work because of the persistency of the present County Council in trying to insert in their Bills a Betterment Clause.

*Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The proper course is to move the Adjournment of the Debate.

Sir J. BLUNDELL MAPLE: I simply move, then, that the Debate be adjourned.

Mr. R. G. WEBSTER seconded this Motion. He understood that the total sum that would accrue to the County Council was only £5,000 if this Clause were carried, and he ventured to say that an amount not very far from that sum had already been wasted in the Committee Rooms of the House. How did they know that the present majority of the London County Council would not be changed into a very considerable minority at the next Elections? In the interest of the ratepayers of London, he hoped the Motion would, if necessary, be pressed to a Division.

*Mr. J. F. MOULTON said, it was with unmitigated delight that he heard the Motion for Adjournment on the ground that a majority of the Moderate Party might be elected at the County Council Elections in March, and that they would give up Betterment, because the language that was being used on the platform by Moderate Candidates was very different from this, and represented that both Parties were equally eager to relieve the burden of London in this respect. He submitted that there was not the slightest reason for the Adjournment of the Debate. It was degrading to the House to suggest that it was to be a condition for the Bill being allowed to be discussed in the Commons, that they should accept the form which the Lords had approved, and which the Commons had not. It was most important thatthese Bills should be read a second time early in the Session in order that there should be time to discuss this question.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.) thought it was much to be regretted that hon. Members should bring forward in that House purely

electioneering matter. They were really discussing a matter of very considerable importance, which might be treated upon its merits. His hon. Friend who moved the adjournment of the Debate expressed what, he believed, was the general desire—that the County Council should get to work upon this matter at the earliest possible moment, in order that employment might be found for those who were so much in want; but then, if that was his object, surely it was hardly logical that he should proceed at once to move the Adjournment of the Debate. He believed that, on the merits of the case, the House was pretty generally agreed that the advantage of the improvement should go to the public and not to private authorities. Surely if the object of both Parties was the same, this was a question for the arranging of a compromise. His suggestion was, that his hon. Friend should withdraw this Amendment and allow the Bill to go before the Committee. The best thing would be to secure a Joint Committee of both Houses, and he thought that at the present stage they might easily come to an agreement. If this were done the result would be that this important improvement might almost immediately be put in hand to the great advantage of the people of London.

Sir J. B. MAPLE said, he had great pleasure in accepting his suggestion. No doubt it would be a great advantage to the working classes.

Amendment withdrawn.

Bill read 2°.

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL (VAUXHALL BRIDGE) BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a Second time."—*(Mr. J. Stuart.)*

Motion agreed to.

Bill read 2°.

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL (TRAMWAYS) BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a Second time.—*(Mr. J. Stuart.)*

MR. H. KIMBER said, the Bill proposed to take over not only the whole of the Tramways of the Metropolis, but work them without limit as to time or conditions. He did not know whether it was the intention of the County Council to exercise that power if they got it to that unlimited extent. If it was their intention only to work the Tramways temporarily he should be quite content. He thought it was only reasonable that municipalities, having been endowed with the powers, and having the Tramways on their hands, would be at liberty temporarily to work them; but beyond the temporary working there was a strong objection on principle. This Bill proposed to introduce a large innovation in their system. The effect would be to make the London County Council the patrons of thousands—he might say tens of thousands—of persons who would be voters for the County Council. It would put into their hands a patronage which might be abused and very seriously impair the fair working of their institutions. There was a Bill now before the House backed by seven Members, five of whom sat on the opposite side, all bearing very respected names. The Bill seemed to be a tolerably fair Bill. It was headed "Tramways (Local Authorities) Bill." While it gave the municipalities power to obtain the Tramways it provided for the temporary working for a certain period until lessees could be obtained for them. He was not going to oppose the Bill, for with limitations he thought the Bill should pass. Perhaps these were matters more for a Committee, and if in order he should like to Move that these two Bills be referred to the same Committee. He hoped it would be a large Committee—larger than a Private Bill Committee. If these two Bills were put together a good Bill might be made out of them.

SIR J. B MAPLE did not observe that the County Council took any power under the Bill to buy horses with which to work the tramways. He did not know if it was proposed to run the tramways without horses. It was comparatively easy to keep the rails from rising or falling below the level of the road, but when they came to the question of buying horses it was a very large affair. It would require a good deal of consideration. He thought the suggestion of his hon. Friend would be a very good one to follow.

*MR. G. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) said, it was an unusual thing to propose that a Public Bill and a Private Bill should be referred to the same Committee. It was, he believed, altogether without precedent. What was proposed was no new thing. It was only new to London; many municipalities dealt with it. Give to London municipal power under the Municipal Corporations Act and these difficulties as regards Legislation would cease.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read 2°.

NOTICES OF MOTION.

The Ballot for Motions by private Members having taken place,—

MR. S. T. EVANS (Glamorgan, Mid): Upon a point of Order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is it permissible for one hon. Member to put down the name of any other hon. Member on the Paper for a Notice of Motion?

*MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER was understood to say that he was not aware of any irregularity.

MR. S. T. EVANS: I want to ask whether it is a fact that hon. Members have to-day put down the names of other Members in large numbers?

[No answer was given.]

QUESTIONS.

FOREIGN PLATE.

SIR S. MONTAGU (Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade—(1) whether he is aware that silver plate imported from abroad is stamped (contrary to the spirit of the Merchandise Marks Act) with Hall-marks identical with those used for British plate, with the addition only of the letter F; (2) whether he is aware that such plate is largely bought by the public as British plate, and is also re-exported as such; (3) whether he is aware that British manufacturers have expressed their desire that foreign plate should after assay be stamped with marks quite distinct from those used on British plate; and (4) whether he will bring in a Bill to consolidate and amend existing Acts relating to Hall-marking?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. J. BRYCE, Aberdeen, S.): All imported gold and silver plate is required by law to be assayed on importation, and, if found to be of standard quality, it is then Hall-marked in the same way as British plate, but with the addition of the letter F. The design of mark on foreign plate can hardly be said to be contrary to the spirit of the Merchandise Marks Act, as it is neither calculated to deceive, nor a false trade description, within the meaning of that Act. The Board have received no evidence that such plate is largely bought or re-exported; or that there is a general demand by manufacturers for a more distinctive marking. Any change towards a more restrictive system of marking foreign plate could not be made without consideration of our Treaty obligations with countries importing British plate. As to a Consolidation Bill, I see no prospect of bringing in such a measure at present.

THE BOMBAY CIVIL FUND.

SIR H. S. KING (Hull, Central): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India—(1) whether his attention has been called to the fact that, under existing Rules of the Bombay Civil Fund, while the widow of a deceased subscriber receives £400 a year, and each daughter £100, and any daughter who came on the fund after 1865, receives a further bonus of £1,000 on marriage, no provision is made to give extra benefits to daughters, who, coming on the Fund in middle life, at 40 years, or over, have practically no expectations of marriage; (2) whether a memorial has been submitted to him by a lady, who stated that her father died in 1890, at the age of 85, having paid subscriptions to the Fund for 63 years, and his wife, having predeceased him, left four daughters on the Fund, whose ages ranged from 62 to 45, whose prospective chances of obtaining £1,000 by marriage she stated to be *nil*, and complaining that, although her father had made exceptional sacrifices to the Fund these daughters are excluded from a part of its benefits; and (3) whether, as under Sections 2 and 4 of the Bombay Civil Fund Act, 1882, discretion is given to the Secretary of State to give additional benefits, if he shall deem it reasonable, he will exercise the discretion by arranging that a lady pensioner, coming on the Fund after a certain age may, by abandoning her claim to £1,000 on marriage, receive compensation in the shape of interest on that sum, to be added to her pension of £100 per annum.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.): The facts are as given in the hon. Member's first and second questions, but he is mistaken if he supposes, as he apparently does, that the pension of £100 to a married daughter continues after marriage. The donation of £1,000 is contingent on marriage, and the pension then ceases. An unmarried daughter has her pension during her life. As regards the third question, it was proposed to the subscribers of the Fund, before the passing of the Act of 1882, that the donations to sons on attaining majority, and to daughters on marriage, should be somewhat diminished, in order that children's pensions (including, of course, those of unmarried daughters) might be increased; but the members of the Fund declined to accept this suggestion; and it is not intended to propose any variation of the settlement which was then made, and was distinctly accepted as final.

SEAL FISHERIES IN THE NORTH PACIFIC.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Government of the United States have made a Convention or Treaty with Russia as to the seal fisheries in the North Pacific Ocean; and, if so, whether he can lay upon the Table a copy of the Convention or Treaty?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): An Agreement between the United States and Russia with regard to the fur seal fisheries in Behring Sea and the North Pacific Ocean was concluded in May last, and Her Majesty's Government learn that there is no present intention of altering or modifying it. Its chief provisions are similar to those contained in the Agreement between this country and Russia, relative to the seal fisheries, the text of which will be found in the correspondence laid before Parliament in June 1893. [Russia No. 1, 1893.]

Mr. T. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): Is the Agreement limited in point of time?

Sir E. GREY: My impression is, that it remains in force until either party gives notice of its intention to change or modify it.

THE VACCINATION COMMISSION.

Mr. T. L. WHARTON (York, N.R., Ripon): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board when the Vaccination Commission concluded their sittings; whether he is aware that many Boards of Guardians are delaying taking any action with regard to unvaccinated children until the Report is published; and, will he explain what is the reason of the delay?

The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. G. J. Shaw-Lefevre, Bradford, Central): I am informed that the Vaccination Commission have practically concluded their evidence, and have only their Report to consider. The delay in the conclusion of their inquiry is stated to be due to the very large amount of evidence received, and the time required to complete the investigations instituted by the Commission into the circumstances of particular outbreaks of Small-pox. I am aware that there are cases where Boards of Guardians are delaying taking action with regard to unvaccinated children pending the publication of the Report, and I have been anxiously awaiting its issue?

Mr. WHARTON: May I ask whether, in view of the fact that a great number of Boards of Guardians are awaiting the Report, a circular could be sent to these Boards calling attention to the state of the law?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: They have been informed of the state of the law very often; but it is very difficult to call upon them to enforce it pending the Report of the Commission.

Mr. C. B. STUART-WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam): Is it the fact that this Royal Commission was appointed seven years ago?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: No, it is not quite so bad as that. I think it is about four years since it was appointed.

Mr. WHARTON: May 1889.

BEHRING SEA COMPENSATION.

Sir G. BADEN-POWELL: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whether he can give any information as to the payment of the sum of 425,000 dollars which the United States Government have undertaken to pay as compensation to sealers under the general award of the Behring Sea Arbitration; and, whether steps have been taken for the appropriation of this sum in Congress before its rising early in the month of March?

Sir E. GREY: The President has, in his Message to Congress, recommended that provision be made for the prompt payment of this sum, and Her Majesty's Ambassador has reported that there is no reason to doubt that the sum in question will be appropriated before the rising of Congress.

RAILWAY TO VICTORIA NYANZA.

Sir G. BADEN-POWELL: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whether the sum necessary for the construction of a railway from some port on the East Coast of Africa to the Victoria Nyanza Lake will be placed on the Estimates for this year; whether he can lay upon the Table any further Papers in reference to this important subject; and, whether such Papers will include any correspondence on the rumoured proposal to joint action by Germany and Great Britain in the construction of such a railway?

Sir E. GREY: The Chancellor of the Exchequer answered the first paragraph of the hon. Member's question yesterday. The answer to the last part is that there are no further Papers to lay on this subject, nor has there been any proposal for joint action with Germany.

PARCEL POSTAGE.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Postmaster General, whether the minimum charge for a parcel posted to Australia is 1s. 6d. for any weight not exceeding 2 lb., as against a minimum charge of 10d. for 1 lb. to Canada, and 9d. for 1 lb. to Cape Colony; and, whether the minimum weight transmitted to the British Possessions generally is 1 lb., at an average rate of 8d. or 9d.; whether, under the new agreement with the French Government, a parcel weighing 11 lb. can be sent from this country to France by post for 2s. 2d., and whether a parcel of the same weight sent to Australia would cost 8s. 3d.; and, whether, in view of the low rates charged for ocean freightage, he will take steps for a reduction in the minimum of both weight and postage in the case of parcels for Australia?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. A. MORLEY, Nottingham, E.): The hon. Member's information is substantially correct. Some months ago I approached the Australian Post Offices with a view to a revision of parcel postage in the direction indicated in the question; but they find the time inopportune for the sacrifice of revenue involved. The subject, however, will not be lost sight of.

INTERNATIONAL POSTAGE.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON: I beg to ask the Postmaster General, whether the German Postmaster General, Dr. von Stephan, has proposed the summoning of an International Postal Conference, to consider the question of introducing a common International postage stamp; whether the proposal has been accepted; and, if so, when and where such Conference will meet; if he can state the date at which the ordinary quinquennial Conference of the Postal Union should assemble; whether that date has been postponed; and, if so, for what reason; and, when and where the Conference will meet?

MR. A. MORLEY: I have no reason to suppose that such a proposal has been made; with reference to certain newspaper reports on this subject, it may be opportune to mention that Dr. von Stephen strenuously opposed such a proposal at the Vienna Postal Congress of 1891; the next Postal Union Congress is to be held at Washington in 1897. It has not been postponed.

BALLYCOTTON PIER.

CAPTAIN A. J. C. DONELAN (Cork, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, whether he is aware that the fissures in the pier at Ballycotton, county Cork, are rapidly widening, and that the storm-wall has opened out from the pier for more than half its length; whether he is also aware that, owing to the sinking of the pier, the roadway is covered in rainy weather with large pools of water from six to eight inches deep, and that about 40 square feet of the outer end is undermined to such an extent that it will probably soon fall into the sea; and, whether, in view of the absolute necessity of this pier for the safety of the Ballycotton fishermen, steps will be taken to secure it against further dilapidation?

*THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): No doubt my hon. and gallant Friend is already aware that the Grand Jury of county Cork are responsible for maintaining the pier in question, but the Board of Works have power, in cases of emergency, to execute necessary repairs and charge the cost on the county. The pier was inspected by the Board's Assistant Engineer last December, and again last month by the Coast Guard Officer. The former found that practically no movement had occurred in the Sea and Wharf Walls since the pier had been vested in the Grand Jury in 1888; and the Coast Guard Officer reported that the pier had sustained no damage from recent storms. I am advised that nothing has occurred since to warrant the belief that the stability of the work has in any sense been endangered. What I would suggest to my hon. and gallant Friend is that the fishermen of Ballycotton should memorialise the Grand Jury of Cork to maintain the pier in a proper state.

CAPTAIN DONELAN: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that I inspeted the pier on the 3rd of last month, and that I can vouch for the substantial accuracy of the statements in the questions? and will he endeavour to make some arrangement with the Grand Jury in the county of Cork, who have very properly declined to take over the pier in its present condition.

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT: The pier is already vested in the Grand Jury, who are now responsible for its maintenance. My suggestion is that the fishermen should themselves apply to the Grand Jury on the subject.

DISCHARGES FROM THE ARMY.

*SIR C. W. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, whether the number of men discharged on completion of service and under Section 81 of the Army Act of 1881 was in 1893 greatly inferior to the number discharged as invalids, by purchase of their discharge, by the indulgence of a free discharge, as not likely to ever become efficient, on conviction, or for misconduct?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling, &c.): The number of men discharged from the Army on completion of their service and under Section 81 of the Army Act, is about double the number of those discharged on account of the other causes referred to in the question. The right hon. Baronet has apparently overlooked the men discharged on completion of their reserve service.

THE ATLANTIC MAIL SERVICES.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is aware that while some of the steamships of the White Star and Cunard lines employed to convey the British Mails from Liverpool to New York are fast boats, others are comparatively slow, and that there is a difference of two, three, or even four days in the passage; for instance, the mails despatched from London viâ Liverpool on January 23 were delivered at the same time as those despatched from London viâ Southampton on January 26; whether vessels of other lines sailing from Southampton two or three days later than the slow or "tramp" boots from Liverpool have constantly reached New York before or side by side with the latter; whether the British Post Office pays for the conveyance of letters to New York 3s. per pound to the boats leaving Liverpool whether slow or fast, and 1s. 8d. per pound to those leaving Southampton; and whether he will arrange to despatch the mails by fast boats exclusively, irrespective of the port of departure or the company to which they belong?

MR. A. MORLEY: Full information in regard to the various steamship services to New York is regularly furnished to the House in the Paper known as *Sir John Leng's Return*. The steamers carrying the two mails mentioned in the first paragraph reached New York on the same day, but information as to the arrival of the mails at the New York Post Office has not yet been received. It is the fact that, while the sea conveyance by German and American steamers going direct from Southampton to New York is paid for at the Postal Union rate, 1s. 9½d. (not 1s. 8d.) a pound, a special rate of 3s. a pound is paid to the contractors for the British Packet Service, who are bound to despatch their steamers on fixed days and to call at Queenstown for the mails. The senders of letters can secure by special superscription the carriage of any letter by any steamer they may prefer to the mail steamer; and it is not proposed to alter the present arrangement by which letters not so superscribed are sent by the Contract Packets.

CIVIL BILL COURTS IN IRELAND.

MR. J. MAINS (Donegal, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, will he explain why the Civil Bill Court Quarter Sessions of the Peace and Licensing Sessions, which were formerly held at Buncrana, where all the County Court business of the Innishowen district was transacted, have now been abolished, with the result that suitors and others have to go either to Letterkenny or Lifford, many miles distant, in order to have their cases heard; and, if inquiry will be made with a view to re-establishing the Buncrana Sessions, under 14 and 15 Vic., c. 57, s. 31?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): My hon. Friend appears to have been misinformed in this matter. It is true that in 1892 certain changes were made in these Courts on the recommendation of the solicitors practising in the Lifford Division of the county; but the only effect of the changes was that the sittings should be held at Buncrana in Hilary and Michaelmas, and at Carndonagh in Trinity of each year. I shall be happy to hand a copy of the *Gazette* giving effect to these changes to the hon. Gentleman, if he so desire.

THE WEIGHING OF CATTLE.

Mr. M. H. SHAW-STEWART (Renfrew, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade, if he is aware that since the passing of the Weighing of Cattle Act, 1891, some auctioneers are erecting within their cattle marts weigh-bridges with automatic dials, the smallest divisions of which show only quarters of hundredweights, so that the weight of cattle cannot be ascertained to a pound; and, if he will ascertain whether Inspectors of Weights and Measures can accurately apply the test for sensitiveness on a dial weigh-bridge of which the smallest division marks 28 lbs., whereas under No. 55 of the Model Regulations, 1890, the test is that 2 lbs. should move the finger of a 2-ton weigh-bridge?

Mr. BRYCE: I am aware that some auctioneers prefer to use dial weigh-bridges graduated in the manner mentioned by the hon. Member, but the testing of such machines as to sensitiveness does not rest with the Board of Trade, but with the Local Authorities who appoint the Inspectors of Weights and Measures. The test for sensitiveness could not be properly applied unless the graduations on the dial were of sufficient width to indicate the limits of sensitiveness, and the Standards Department had called the attention of some Inspectors to this test.

THE CHANNEL MAIL SERVICE.

Mr. J. P. WILLIAMS (Birmingham, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the contract for the conveyance of a portion of the mails between London and Paris is about to be given to a French Company; whether, to enable them to fulfil the same, the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway Company are to transfer the most modern portion of their fleet to the French Flag; and, whether Board of Trade Inspectors will continue to certify to the seaworthiness of the vessels in question?

Mr. BRYCE: I am informed by the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway Company that the day service of mails between London and Paris is paid for by the French Government, and that the vessels employed have always sailed under the French Flag. It appears that the existing Contract with the French Post Office will terminate next year, and that the French Government have determined to give the new one to the Northern of France Railway Company, it being a condition that the vessels employed should be built in France and owned by a French Company. The Board of Trade have no power to survey foreign vessels for passenger certificates, unless it is intended to carry passengers between places in the United Kingdom.

Mr. J. P. WILLIAMS: Do I understand that the Board of Trade will have no power to examine the vessels by which these mails are to be conveyed?

Mr. BRYCE: No, being French vessels, we cannot survey French vessels.

Mr. J. P. WILLIAMS: May I ask whether the Act of Parliament does not provide for a revision of the arrangements with the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway Company this year?

Mr. BRYCE: I cannot answer that question without reference to the Statute, and, in any case, it is a question for the Postmaster General.

THE LOSS OF THE "ELBE."

Mr. H. S. FOSTER (Suffolk, Lowestoft): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade, whether he can now state what steps have been or will be taken in reference to the wreck of the steamship *Elbe*, and the danger it offers to navigation and to the property of the fishing industry?

Mr. M. M. BODKIN (Roscommon, N.): Before the President of the Board of Trade answers that question, may I ask him whether, having regard to the statement already made that there is no public fund available for this purpose, he did not think that the object indicated in the question may be fairly left to private enterprise, and possibly a company promoted for that object?

Mr. BRYCE: The question of my hon. Friend invites an expression of opinion from me which perhaps it would be scarcely in order for me to give. With regard to the question on the Paper the Trinity House inform me that they are not aware that the wreck of the *Elbe* constitutes a danger to navigation, and that the Mercantile Marine Fund is not applicable for the purpose of clearing away obstructions to fishing. The Board of Trade have no power whatever in the matter.

Mr. H. S. FOSTER: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he did not inform me last week that he had a telegram from Lowestoft stating that one of the masts of the *Elbe* had been seen above the water, and whether, if that were so, whether it is not a danger to navigation and to the property of the fishermen, seeing that the wreck is situated in the very heart of the fishing-beds?

Mr. BRYCE: What I said last week was that I had telegraphic information that the captain of a fishing craft made that statement. I did not say it was a fact, and subsequent inquiry entirely failed to discover the projecting mast.

Mr. H. S. FOSTER: Cannot a buoy be placed at the spot?

Mr. BRYCE: I have already told the hon. Member three or four times that the Board of Trade have no more power than he has in the matter.

Mr. T. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): Have the Board of Trade no control over the Trinity Board?

Mr. BRYCE: No, Sir; none whatever.

Mr. T. GIBSON BOWLES: Don't they spend the Trinity Board's money?

Mr. BRYCE: No.

THE DESIGN OF STEAMSHIPS.

Mr. TANKERVILLE CHAMBERLAYNE (Southampton): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will consider the advisability of recommending shipbuilders (or of compelling them by legislation if that course should be deemed preferable), to construct steamers with overhanging or raking stems as formerly, inasmuch as in the event of a collision the damage sustained from a vessel so constructed is almost always confined to those parts above the water line, whereas with the present ram-shaped bows a ship run into is almost certain to sink?

Mr. BRYCE: I should be very unwilling to interfere with the discretion of shipbuilders or shipowners, or to offer them advice as to the construction of their vessels. I would remind the hon. Member that the question of a sloping as opposed to a straight stem was brought by a witness under the notice of the Royal Commission on Loss of Life at Sea, but the Report of that Commission did not contain any recommendation upon this point, nor in fact, any reference to it.

INTERMEDIATE EDUCATION IN WALES.

Mr. J. HERBERT LEWIS (Flint District): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, what is the present position of the scheme for the establishment of a Central Welsh Board of Intermediate Education?

The VICE PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Mr. A. H. D. Acland, York, W.R., Rotherham): When this scheme was submitted to the Education Department by the Charity Commissioners last year, it was thought best to defer its consideration until the various county schemes had all become law, as, otherwise, difficulties might have arisen with regard to the constitution of the Central Board. These county schemes have now all become law, with the exception of that for the County of Glamorgan, against which an Appeal has been made to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. In view of the fact that several County Councils are already actively prosecuting work under the county schemes, and of the further delay which must occur before the reference to the Judicial Committee in the Glamorganshire case can be disposed of, I propose to reconsider the question whether it is desirable to delay the progress of the Central Scheme any longer.

THE POLICE FORCE IN COUNTY WEXFORD.

Mr. THOMAS J. HEALY (Wexford, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, what is the number of extra police at present stationed in the County Wexford, and their cost to the county?

Mr. J. MORLEY: There are at the present moment 11 men of an extra force on the strength of the police establishment in Wexford, and the cost of these men to the county is at the rate of about £370 per annum. It has been decided to entirely abolish this extra force as soon as arrangements can be made, and, in any case, before April 1 next.

HAULBOWLINE DOCKYARD.

Mr. W. H. K. REDMOND (on behalf of the Member for the St. Patrick Division of Dublin (Mr. W. Field): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, whether provision has been made in this year's Estimate to increase the efficiency of Haulbowline Dockyard, so that it may be utilised to give the employment originally intended; whether any more training ships have been appointed for duty on the Irish coast; and whether the Naval expenditure in Ireland has been estimated in accordance with the increase of taxation and the rates expected by Irish taxpayers?

The CIVIL LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Mr. E. Robertson, Dundee): As the subject to which the question relates will be more appropriately discussed when the Estimates, which will be laid on the Table next week, are before the House, I am not prepared to anticipate this discussion in answer to a question.

*Sir C. W. DILKE: Can the hon. Gentleman say on what day?

Mr. E. ROBERTSON: That I cannot say at present.

IRISH LIGHTHOUSES.

Mr. THOMAS J. HEALY: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade, what previous experience the Inspector of Lights of the Irish Lights Board had in the working of the different kinds of machinery used in Irish Lighthouses before his appointment to his present position; whether it is the case that he was a master mariner on board one of the Irish Lights Board steamers before his present appointment, where he could have gained no experience to qualify him for such appointment; and, whether it has been brought to his notice that the lighthouse keepers have to instruct him in the working of the lighting machinery when he makes his inspections?

Mr. BRYCE: The selection of their Officers by the Commissioners of Irish Lights is in no way under the control of the Board of Trade, but I am informed by the Commissioners that all machinery in connection with lights and fog signals is in charge, not of the Inspector of Lights, but of the Engineer. The Commissioners further inform me that the present Inspector, like his predecessor, was in command of one of their steamers, and that he held that command for 18 years before promotion to his present post.

Mr. T. J. HEALY asked whether any particular body had any authority over the Irish Lights Board?

Mr. BRYCE said, the Board of Trade had some authority over the Board in question, but not in regard to this point.

Mr. W. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick) asked whether the right hon. Gentleman or the Government would bring in a Bill, as had been promised, to revise the constitution of the Irish Lights Board?

Mr. BRYCE did not remember having made any such promise, but thought it might have been made by some one else—perhaps by the Chief Secretary.

Mr. TIMOTHY M. HEALY (Louth, N.) asked upon what points had the Board of Trade any authority over the Irish Lights Board?

Mr. BRYCE: That is a question which I think should be put upon the Paper.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: I will put one to the right hon. Gentlemen on the subject.

Mr. T. J. HEALY: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade, whether he is aware that the reserve provisions which, by an order of the Board of Trade, are required to be stored in Irish rock and island lighthouse stations on or before the 1st of October in each year, were not landed on the Slyne Head Lighthouse till the 24th of November, 1894, though the Irish Lights Commissioners sent their steamer round the Irish coasts in the month of August, 1894; and that there was plenty of room on board the steamer for the carriage of provisions; who is responsible for the disregard of the orders of the Board of Trade; and, whether he will direct an inquiry into the circumstances?

Mr. BRYCE: I am informed in a letter from the Commissioners of Irish Lights that it is customary for them to supply a reserve stock of provisions to rock lighthouses, before the commencement of each winter, and that these matters are regulated by them without reference to the Board of Trade, the officers of the Lighthouse service being responsible to the Commissioners for the proper discharge of their duties, with which, in the matter of the supply of reserve provisions to the Slyne Head Lighthouses, the Irish Lights Commissioners had no fault to find. In this matter the Irish Lights Commissioners are not responsible to the Board of Trade, and the Board of Trade have no power to issue such order as is referred to. I see no reason whatever for any inquiry.

DISMISSAL OF AN INDIAN ARMY SURGEON.

MR. W. S. CAINE (Bradford, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India, if he is aware that Surgeon Major F. Clarence Smith has been dismissed by His Excellency the Governor of Madras upon certain written charges brought against him by Mr. Robert Clegg, a member of the Indian Civil Service, stationed at Combaconum; that Surgeon Major Smith has been refused a copy of the written charges against him on which the Governor has taken action; and that in a memorial submitted to the Madras Government by Surgeon Major Smith, he complains that he has been condemned unheard, and without any knowledge of what the charges are upon which he has been dismissed; if the matter has been referred home to the Secretary of State; and, if so, what has been the result; and if he will lay upon the Table of the House, copies of all correspondence between Surgeon Major Smith and the Government of Madras, and between them and the India Office?

MR. H. H. FOWLER: On the 18th of January, Surgeon Major Smith sent to the Government of Madras a memorial to the Secretary of State appealing against the decision of Madras Government in his case. The Government of Madras forwarded that memorial by the mail which arrived yesterday; the matter is therefore *sub judice*, and I do not think that it would be expedient for me to make any statement.

ENGINE-ROOM ARTIFICERS.

*MR. G. HOWELL: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he is aware that the Engine-Room Artificers in the districts of Chatham and Sheerness have been compelled to go to a particular shop or contractor for their uniforms, although such clothing is paid for by the men themselves, in violation of the Truck Acts (1 and 2 Will. IV., c. 37, s. 2, and 50 and 51 Vic., c. 46, s. 6); and, whether the Engine-Room Artificers will be permitted to purchase their own uniforms where they please, with their own money, without interference by the officials at those places; or, if not, whether the Government will supply the uniforms to the men without deductions from their pay?

MR. W. ALLAN (Gateshead) asked whether these men could not receive their uniforms free?

MR. E. ROBERTSON: That is a matter which requires much consideration. With regard to the question on the Paper, the local order in force up to the end of last year, that Engine-Room Artificers entered at Sheerness and Chatham should obtain their uniforms from a firm who supplied such clothing in exact conformity with Admiralty regulations, has been rescinded. Engine-Room Artificers are now allowed to purchase their uniforms where they please, but, of course, if such uniforms are found to be not of the proper service pattern, the cost of replacing the same falls upon the men.

THE FROST AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.

MR. H. S. FOSTER: I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, whether he is aware that, in consequence of the present severe state of the weather, and the state of the roads in scattered rural districts, the attendance of the children in such districts, where they are compelled to go some distance to the elementary school, is very seriously affected, as compared with urban schools; whether, notwithstanding, the register has to be marked, thereby adversely affecting the grant; and, whether he will consider the desirability of modifying the existing regulation under such special circumstances as at present exist?

MR. ACLAND: I am aware of the circumstances mentioned by the hon. Member. Country schools at a time like this certainly need lenient treatment. I think, however, that the case will be adequately met by the measures I have already mentioned. In cases where schools have been necessarily closed in consequence of the severity of the weather, a proportionately smaller number of school meetings than the 400 now required as a minimum will be accepted as qualifying for the grant; and I am issuing instructions to Her Majesty's Inspectors that, in assessing the grants, they should judge leniently schools now shortly to be inspected, whose efficiency has been temporarily impaired in consequence of irregular attendance caused by the recent inclement weather.

THE "SPECIAL CAMPAIGN PENSION."

MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether one of the qualifications required from a candidate for a "Special Campaign Pension" is that he must be destitute of means of support; and, whether he can see his way to abrogate this condition, which gives a preference to the thriftless, and throw the pensions open to old soldiers who comply with all the other conditions prescribed?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The conditions under which this special compassionate pension is granted are at present under my careful consideration.

INDIAN RAILWAYS.

MR. R. G. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he is aware that in the Administration Report on the Railways of India for 1893–4 there is a schedule of railways lately surveyed, at present under survey, or recently put forward for consideration, in all amounting to a mileage of 6,167; whether, during the next three years, he has authorised the construction of 2,000 miles; and whether, in view of the serious depression in the iron, coal, and other industries, and the lack of employment in this country, and the large amount of unemployed capital, the Government proposes to authorise the whole of the above mileage to be immediately constructed.

MR. H. H. FOWLER: My answer to the hon. Member's first question is in the affirmative. The total mileage now under construction or sanctioned is about 2,600, of which about 1000 miles are included in the schedule to which the hon. Member refers. It is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to proceed with the construction of railways in India as rapidly as the resources of the Government of India will permit, and, at the same time, to make use of private agencies for that purpose whenever suitable terms can be arranged.

MR. R. G. WEBSTER asked whether the Government could not see their way to giving an Imperial guarantee for the construction of railways in India, in the same way that an Imperial guarantee was given some years ago for the same purpose?

MR. H. H. FOWLER: That is just a point to which we do not see our way.

RAILWAYS IN AFRICA.

MR. R. G. WEBSTER: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, in view of the fact that Her Majesty's Government, under Treaties with the Great Powers, have agreed to promote railways in Africa to develope that country, he is in a position to inform the House what steps the Government propose to take this Session in this matter?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I do not agree in the accuracy of the hon. Gentleman's premise in regard to the Brussels General Act. But I may state that as regards West Africa the construction of Railways in the West African Colonies is under careful consideration. Surveys have been made at Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast, and are now in course of execution at Lagos. If it be finally decided that railways are practicable and expedient at these places they will probably be constructed by the Colonies concerned at their own cost; and there will, therefore, be no occasion nor necessity to come to Parliament with respect to them. As regards South Africa, the House had already been informed that Her Majesty's Government arrived last year at an agreement with the British South Africa Company and the Bechuanaland Railway Company, whereby, on the completion of sections of the line of railway through the Bechuanaland Protectorate, a subsidy would be given by the Bechuanaland Government to the line, and, within certain limits of time, it rests with those Companies to commence the work. The Natal railway is being extended to Johannesburg under agreement between the Natal Government and the South African Republic; and permission has lately been given to certain gentlemen in Natal to make a railway from the Natal border into Zululand.

THE BURMESE CIVIL SERVICE.

Mr. W. S. CAINE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India, if his attention has been called to an official Circular recently addressed by the Chief Commissioner of Burma to the Members of the Civil Service throughout the province, remonstrating with them with regard to the practice which had become prevalent of contracting illicit alliances with Burmese women, and speaking of it as a public scandal; and, if he is able to lay a copy of the Circular upon the Table of the House?

Mr. H. H. FOWLER: I have heard nothing of any Circular on the subject to which my hon. Friend's question refers; but, since that question was put down, my attention has been called to a newspaper report of a speech by the Chief Commissioner with the purport of which, as there reported, I entirely agree. From this speech it would appear that he has "semi-officially" and confidentially addressed some of his officers on the subject. If it is true that such a document was issued, and that it was confidential and not official, it is not likely that it will be published either in India or in this country.

SLAUGHTER OF KINE IN INDIA.

Sir WILLIAM WEDDERBURN, (Banffshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India, whether he can now state what answer has been given by the Government of India to the memorial of Sir W. Hudson, President of the Behar Planters' Association, dated 28th January 1894, on the subject of the slaughter of kine in India; whether Mr. Arthur Rogers' scheme, recommended in that memorial, for restoring friendly relations between the Mahomedans and Hindus, has been considered by the Government of India and reported on as requested by the Secretary of State in his despatch of 31st May last; whether the Viceroy in Council has approved of Mr. Rogers' scheme, and that it has been partially introduced by two Local Governments; whether he is aware that Mr. Rogers has been dismissed from his appointment as an engineer on the Bengal and North Western Railway; and, whether he will explain the reasons for Mr. Rogers' dismissal, and will lay upon the Table of the House a memorial from Mr. Rogers in which he sets forth the facts of his case and prays for inquiry and redress?

***Mr. H. H. FOWLER**: A question similar to that of my hon. Friend was put in the Legislative Council of the Viceroy on the 25th January last. Sir Antony MacDonnell, the Member of Council in charge of the Home Department, stated in reply that Mr. Rogers' scheme, though not brought before the Government in the regular way, had been brought under their notice un-officially; that the Government of India had made no use of Mr. Rogers' remedy, and that it appeared to them to contain no proposals of a practical character which the Government of India had not adopted independently of it. I believe that Mr. Rogers was for about four years in the service of the Bengal North Western Railway Company as an Assistant Engineer and that his services have been dispensed with by that Company. In consequence of an allegation by Mr. Rogers that he had been dismissed from the service of the Railway Company through pressure alleged to have been exercised upon them by the Governments of Bengal and the North West Provinces and Oudh, I am informed by the Government of India that, so far as they are aware, the Board of the Bengal and North Western Railway Company has dispensed with Mr. Rogers' services for its own reasons, and that

> "no pressure was brought upon it either by the Government of Bengal, or that of the North Western Provinces and Oudh or by the Government of India in the matter".

I observe that Sir Antony MacDonnell made a statement in the Legislative Council to the same effect.

RAILWAY TO VICTORIA NYANZA.

Mr. YERBURGH (Chester): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whether he is aware that an agreement has been signed between the German Colonial Office, the German East Africa Company, and a syndicate of banking firms, for the commencement of a railway from the German East African Coast to Central Africa, the Victoria Nyanza, and Lake Tanganyika; and, whether in view of Sir Gerald Portal's statement in his Report on Uganda, that there exists in that country a demand for such articles as cotton cloths of best qualities, and that if the present system of transport is continued the demand will be supplied from German sources, and by the German route, the Government will, in the interests of British trade, undertake the construction of the railway as recommended by Sir Gerald Portal?

SIR E. GREY: The construction of a railway from Tanga by a German firm has been begun, but we are not aware of any agreement such as that referred to.

MR. YERBURGH asked whether, in view of the great depression existing at the present time, the Government would reconsider their determination with a view to opening up a fresh market for British trade?

SIR E. GREY said he could not promise to reconsider the answer which the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave yesterday.

SAVING LIFE AT SEA.

MR. H. S. FOSTER: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether it is the fact that, while those who rescue property at sea are entitled to salvage money, there is no legal right for the recovery of any money payment in respect of the saving of life, even though the rescuers incur actual money loss in their successful efforts, often at the greatest personal risk?

MR. BRYCE: Sections 544 and 545 of the Merchant Shipping Act not only provide for the payment of salvage for saving life, but lay down that such salvage, when payable, shall have priority over all other claims for salvage. But in the case of claims against owners, it has been held that a claim for life salvage can only be sustained when some portion of the property has also been salved.

MR. FOSTER asked whether the Board of Trade, in the event of property being insufficient to cover expenses, had not the power to pay such sums, as might in their discretion seem fit, out of the Mercantile Marine Fund?

MR. BRYCE said that was so.

MR. J. C. MACDONA (Southwark, Rotherhithe) asked whether the right hon. Gentleman was aware that a coroner's inquest was held a short time since on a body drawn out of the Thames at Rotherhithe, which when taken out was quite warm, and, whether the present arrangement under which payment was only made for the recovery of a dead body did not practically amount to prohibition upon attempts to save life?

MR. BRYCE: That seems to relate to a different matter, but I will answer a question if the hon. Member places one on the Paper.

THE INDIAN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been directed to the statement of His Excellency the Viceroy of India, in the Debate in Council on the Indian Tariff Bill, as published at page 53 of the Indian Tariff Act Blue Book, that members of the Indian Legislative Council are only free to speak and vote in the Council for the measure they honestly think best, when that is in accordance with the "mandate" they have received from London; whether he is aware that the late Right Honourable Sir Barnes Peacock and other Authorities on Indian Constitutional Law have denounced that doctrine as an infringement of the rights and privileges of the Council; and, whether, seeing that the Secretary of State for India, in a Despatch dated 15th October, 1874, distinctly stated that the object of the instructions given to the Government of India on this subject was not to fetter the discretion which the Law has vested in the various Legislative Authorities of India, the doctrine now laid down by the Viceroy of India was sanctioned by Her Majesty's Government?

MR. H. H. FOWLER: The question of the hon. Member raises the important and delicate subject of the relations between the Government of India on the one hand and the Home Government and Parliament on the other. It is impossible within the limits of an answer to deal in a satisfactory manner with this matter; I will, therefore, merely say that at the proper time I shall be prepared to maintain that the course which has been taken by Her Majesty's Government and by the Viceroy upon recent occasions is in strict accordance both with the Acts of Parliament regulating the Government of India and with the constitutional and uniform practice under those Acts. In order that the leading precedents may be known to the House, I propose to lay upon the Table the relevant portions of a Despatch of the Duke of Argyll, dated 24th November, 1870, and three despatches of Lord Salisbury, dated, respectively, 31st March, 1874, 15th October, 1874, and 31st May, 1876, in which the relative positions of the Secretary of State and the Government of India were clearly laid down.

THE INDIA TARIFF ACT.

SIR HENRY JAMES (Bury): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India, whether he has received a copy of the Memorial of the Bombay Millowners presented to the Council of the Governor General of India, mentioned at page 24 of the Papers relating to the India Tariff Act; or of the letter of the Secretary to the Millowners' Association of Bombay, dated 10th September, 1894, mentioned at page 27; or of the Memorial and telegram from the Bombay Millowners' Association, mentioned at page 30; and, if he is in possession of copies of such documents, whether he has any objection to make them public?

MR. H. H. FOWLER: The references cited in the first and second clauses of my hon. Friend's question appear to refer to the same representation from the Bombay Millowners' Association. I also have seen the telegram dated the 19th December, cited in the third clause. There is no objection to laying these Papers on the Table if they are desired.

MR. J. H. MADEN (Lancashire, Rossendale): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India, whether his attention has been called to a telegram from *The Times* correspondent at Calcutta, in which he says that it appears that all the mills in India except one had ceased manufacturing counts above 20s.; and, whether, under these circumstances, he still expects to collect any appreciable amount as excise duties?

MR. H. H. FOWLER: I have seen the telegram, which apparently refers to the Calcutta mills output only. I have no official information on the subject.

MR. J. H. MADEN: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether he will place upon the Table copies of the Memorials sent with Sir James Westland's Despatch of 21st March, 1894?

MR. H. H. FOWLER: I have no objection to placing on the Table copies of Papers received with the Government of India Despatch of the 21st March, 1894.

NATIVE RISING IN NIGER PROTECTORATE.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can give any information as to the reported rising of Natives in the Niger Protectorate; whether the Natives who made the attack on Akassa have since then threatened to attack Brass; and, what preparations have been made to support the authority of Her Majesty's Commissioner, Sir Claude MacDonald?

SIR E. GREY: An attack has been made on the establishment of the Royal Niger Company at Akassa by a large number of natives of Brass and other neighbouring tribes. Some of the native employés of the Company were killed. No European lives were lost, but two officers of the Company's police have been severely wounded. We have no corroboration of the reports of intended attacks on Brass, which is well garrisoned. Her Majesty's Commissioner, who has under his command an efficient police force, is supported by the presence of the Admiral commanding the West African Station with a portion of his squadron and by the forces and armed vessels of the Niger Company.

THE NEW ZEALAND LOAN AND MERCANTILE AGENCY.

*MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade—(1) whether his attention has been given to the statement made by Mr. Justice Vaughan Williams, on 19th March 1894, in dealing with the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency Company, that the report of the Official Receiver suggested two distinct frauds; that the Official Receiver had delayed his report too long, the Winding-up Order having been made on 21st July 1893, and the report not having been delivered till 15th February 1894; and that the Board of Trade has expressly claimed to control the discretion of the Official Receivers, both in respect of the expression of their opinion as to fraud having been committed and in respect of the presentation of their reports to the Court; and (2) whether the Board of Trade does now claim or does now exercise any control, and, if so, what control, over the Official Receivers in these two respects?

Mr. BRYCE: In reply to the last paragraph of the question, I have to state that the Board of Trade do not claim or exercise any control over Official Receivers in referenc eeither to the contents of their reports to the Court, under Section 8, or the time of their presentation, beyond that of calling the attention of Official Receivers to any delays which may take place in presenting such reports, and communicating to them any observations or suggestions which may occur to the Department, with a view to ensuring that the Court is placed in possession of all the material facts and circumstances of the case. I may add, with reference to the alleged delay in presenting the report in the case referred to, that the Official Receiver states:—

> "that he was unable to lodge his report at an earlier date in consequence of the complicated nature of the facts and the extent of the preliminary investigations which he had to conduct in order to elicit all the facts which were necessary for framing his report; but that the report was presented in accordance with his usual practice shortly after the first meeting of creditors, and as soon as he was in a position to do so."

*Mr. T. GIBSON BOWLES: Is it not a fact that the Judge stated that there had been delay, and that he threatened to commit the Official Receiver, if he did not present a report?

Mr. BRYCE: These matters engaged the attention of the Board of Trade before I took Office; and I have not had an opportunity of examining all the records. I have given all the information asked for in the question.

*Mr. T. GIBSON BOWLES: But the right hon. Gentleman is the representative of the Board of Trade, and I claim the right of asking what the Department is doing in the matter.

Mr. BRYCE: I have told the hon. Member what the position of the Board of Trade is. He cannot expect me to answer off-hand questions relating to what happened before I took Office. If he desires further information he must ask for it in the usual way.

BOARD OF TRADE STEAMERS.

Sir T. SUTHERLAND (Greenock): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade, what is the total cost at the present time for all purposes of the establishment, in connection with the Board of Trade steamer *Gadfly*, on the Clyde, and *The Midge*, on the Thames; and, whether the whole of such cost, or, if not, what part thereof, is charged to the Mercantile Marine Fund?

Mr. BRYCE: The total cost for the year ending 31st March last, of the establishment in connection with the Board of Trade steamer *Gadfly* on the Clyde, was £1,264; and that of the two launches *Mantis* and *Midge*, on the Thames, was £2,716. The whole of the cost is charged to the Mercantile Marine Fund.

THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

Mr. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington N.): I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education what special duties Mr. Sadler has been appointed to carry out in the Education Department; whether he is the same gentleman who succeeded the right hon. Gentleman as Bursar of Christ College, Oxford; whether the appointment was open to competition or examination by the Civil Service Commissioners; and, under what sub-head the salary for the office was voted by Parliament?

Mr. ACLAND: The work of the Director of Special Inquiries and Reports, to which post Mr. Sadler has been appointed, will be to collect and record much information on educational matters at home and abroad of which the Department is constantly in need. Reports based on his inquiries will be published from time to time under the direction of the Department. The appointment, like other similar appointments in the Education Department and elsewhere, was direct and not by competition. The salary will be in the Estimates of this year under a special sub-head in the Education Vote. There is no Christ College at Oxford: the name is Christ Church, and the office mentioned is that of Steward, not Bursar. Mr. Sadler was appointed by the governing body to succeed me in that office when I left Oxford ten years ago. What this has to do with the subject I do not know. Mr. Sadler, as secretary of the University Extension Delegacy of the University, and in other ways, has rendered most distinguished services to education in this country, which are so well known that I need not add anything on this subject myself.

SIR H. ROSCOE (Manchester S.): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he is aware that the appointment of Mr. Sadler has not received general approval from those interested in educational questions?

MR. ACLAND: So far as I have the means of knowing, I believe the appointment has received the assent and cordial approval of persons interested in Education.

MR. BARTLEY: Are we to understand that the right hon. Gentleman claims the right to appoint somebody to an office the creation of which has not been approved by Parliament, and for which no salary has been voted, and that without going through the ordinary routine of reference to the Civil Service Commissioners?

MR. TIMOTHY M. HEALY: Can the right hon. Gentleman give this House the assurance that Mr. Sadler can spell a word of two syllables?

MR. ACLAND: The appointment has been made in the same way as many similar appointments.

POOR LAW AND DISTRESS FUNDS.

*MR. J. KEIR HARDIE (West Ham, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board, under what section of the Poor Law Acts the officials of the Local Government Board based their refusal of the application recently made by the Clerk to the Portsea Union Guardians for leave to vote £500 from the rates to the Mayor's Fund for the relief of distress in Portsmouth?

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE: The powers of Boards of Guardians in regard to their expenditure are defined by statute; and I was advised that there is no statutory enactment which authorises such an expenditure as was proposed by the Portsmouth Guardians, and that consequently it would be illegal.

*MR. KEIR HARDIE: May I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman is aware that under the Act 15 Vic., c. 105, Section 4, it is provided that the Poor Law Guardians may pay out of the common fund any sum of money, as an annual subscription towards the support and maintenance of any institution, which appears to the Guardians to be calculated to render useful aid in their administration of relief to the poor, and whether the Mayor's Fund would not be covered by this section of the Act?

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE: I have not in my mind the clause referred to; but in the opinion of the Local Government Board, a Board of Guardians would not be justified in handing over money raised by rate to be distributed by another body in no way responsible to the Guardians?

*MR. KEIR HARDIE: May I ask whether, in view of the present exceptional circumstances, the Local Government Board would be prepared to look with a lenient eye on an application of this kind?

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE: I am simply bound by the law, and I cannot authorise a payment outside the limits allowed by law.

ARMY RESERVISTS.

MR. C. E. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, whether the Army Reservists will be entitled on 1st April next to the sum of £1. 10s. 8d., a quarter's pay, and also to £3 deferred pay (from 1st April 1894 to 1st April 1895); and whether he could make arrangements for them to receive at once, say, half their pay, in view of the privations they are suffering from the inclemency of the season?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: The money payable on the 1st April to men of the Army Reserve, is included in the Estimate for the next financial year, and there are no funds now available for such a service.

LOTTERY CIRCULARS.

MR. C. E. SCHWANN: I beg to ask the Postmaster General, whether he has been able to formulate a plan to prevent the transmission through the Post Office of lottery circulars from other countries which periodically flood this country, whilst similar lottery adventures are illegal in Great Britain and Ireland?

MR. A. MORLEY: The question of preventing the transmission of lottery advertisements through the Post is receiving very careful attention from my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, and myself. But I am not at the present moment in a position to announce the decision of the Government on the subject.

THE ENGLISH AND IRISH PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETIES.

Mr. TIMOTHY M. HEALY: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board, whether members of the Irish Pharmaceutical Society are as eligible for appointments for Dispenserships under the Local Government Board as members of the English Pharmaceutical Society; and, if not, will they be placed on the same footing?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: I am advised that it is open to doubt whether members of the Irish Pharmaceutical Society are eligible for appointment to the Dispenserships referred to. I shall be happy to consider whether the regulations affecting the appointment of these officers should be altered in this respect.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: Who has started a doubt in this case affecting the status of the Irish Society's members?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: That I cannot say; but I know there is a doubt upon the subject, and I shall be happy to remove it.

EXTRA POLICE IN COUNTY LIMERICK.

Mr. M. AUSTIN (Limerick, West): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, if steps are being taken to relieve the County Limerick from the tax for extra police, as, according to resolution passed at last Presentment Sessions, such extra force is wholly unnecessary, and which is borne out by the remarks of the County Court Judge.

Mr. J. MORLEY: The extra force charged to the County Limerick has been reduced by 15 men, dating from the 1st inst. A further reduction of five men has been decided on, and will shortly be carried out. The total reduction (20) is equivalent to a relief to county rates to the extent of about £650 per annum. No further reduction is practicable at present.

DISTRESS IN COUNTY LIMERICK.

Mr. M. AUSTIN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, if he has received resolutions from the Newcastle West and Rathkeale Boards of Guardians, and the Fairs and Markets Association of Newcastle West, as well as a memorial from the residents of Glin, County Limerick, directing attention to the great distress prevailing among the labourers and small farmers in the western parts of the county, and urging the opening of relief works to meet the present deplorable condition of the working classes in these districts; and what steps, having regard to the critical condition of the people, the Government are taking in the matter.

Mr. J. MORLEY: The resolutions referred to have been received by the Local Government Board. There is no doubt that, owing to the exceptionally severe weather during the past few weeks, the poorer class, and especially those living in towns, have been reduced to great straits and have suffered much. The relieving officer of the Newcastle West Union has relieved provisionally those requiring assistance, and this officer may be relied upon to see that no persons suffer from actual want of food. The Local Government Board will instruct their inspector to attend the next meeting of the Guardians and consult with them as to the advisability of applying for authority to relax the restrictions on outdoor relief for a short period.

THE BOROUGH OF CHARD.

Mr. E. STRACHEY (Somerset, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board why there has been so much delay in granting the application of the Town Council of Chard for an Order conferring on that Council the powers under Section 33 of the Local Government Act, 1894; and, whether this delay has been caused by any action of the Charity Commissioners?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: The Local Government Board had under consideration the application made in the case of the Borough of Chard for vesting in the Town Council powers under Section 33 of the Local Government Act, 1894. But they have been advised that the resolution which was passed is insufficient, and that it is requisite that an application by a further resolution should be made. The Town Council were informed of this on the 6th inst.

VALUERS AND COUNTY COUNCILS.

Mr. W. H. LONG (Liverpool, West Derby): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if he is aware that the Executive Committee of the County Councils Association has expressed the opinion that the office of Valuer is a place of profit under the County Council, and that persons accepting the appointment will be disqualified from acting as County Councillors on the County Council appointing them; if so, has the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown been taken on this point; and, if that opinion accords with that of the Executive Committee above named, will the Government take steps to remove the disqualification?

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE: I was not aware of the opinion stated to have been given by the Executive Committee of the County Councils Association; and the Local Government Board have not taken the opinion of the Law Officers on the point. Assuming that a Valuer is disqualified, I could not undertake to propose legislation for the purpose of removing the disqualification.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION.

MR. L. P. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has taken any, and what, steps to change the present constitution of the Land Commission; and whether, if he does not at present possess the necessary power to make such changes, he will insert provisions in the forthcoming Land Bill to enable him to do so.

MR. J. MORLEY: The Judicial Commissioner has the *status* and tenure of office of a Judge of the Supreme Court. The other Land Commissioners have the *status* and tenure of office of County Court Judges, subject to this qualification, however—that they are removable by the Lord Chancellor for inability or misbehaviour. The Assistant Commissioners have the *status* of permanent Civil Servants. The constitution of the Land Commission was so fixed by the Land Acts of 1881 and 1891. It probably will become necessary to appoint additional Assistant Commissioners.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): When do you expect to be able to introduce the Land Purchase Bill?

MR. J. MORLEY: We have already announced the introduction of the Welsh Disestablishment Bill for Thursday, and, as soon as that is disposed of, subject to general changes, we shall follow it up immediately with the Irish Land Bill.

DUBLIN MAIN DRAINAGE.

MR. W. FIELD: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is in a position to state if the details of the Main Drainage Question are near a settlement; and whether there is any prospect of the work being commenced early this season?

***MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN**: I assume that the hon. Member refers to Dublin. There is not, at present, any question outstanding as to the Dublin drainage between the War Department and the Corporation. Arrangements as to the work and its commencement rest entirely with the Corporation.

BOERS AND SWAZIS.

***SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT** (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (1) whether the Swazi Queen Regent and Council have refused to issue the Organic Proclamation handing their country over to Boer rule, and have thrown themselves upon the protection of the British Government; (2) whether the Boers have the right, under the Convention of December 1894, to use force to compel the submission of the Swazis; and (3) whether Her Majesty's Government will permit our Swazi allies, whose independence Great Britain has affirmed in three solemn Conventions, to be forcibly subjugated by the Boers.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: The Swazi Queen Regent and Council on the 15th inst., at their meeting, declined to sign the draft Organic Proclamation recommended for their acceptance. They asserted that they belonged to the Queen, a statement which is entirely incorrect; as Her Majesty's Government are precluded by Treaty engagements from declaring a Protectorate over Swaziland. Under the Convention of 1894 the South African Republic will be responsible for peace and order in Swaziland. Her Majesty's Government trust that the Swazis will be wisely and prudently guided by the white men who have assumed the responsibility of advising them, and that they will peacefully accept a settlement in which Her Majesty's Government have been careful to safeguard all Native interests. As regards the third question I do not admit the assumption on which it is based; I endeavoured to explain to the House the other day, that the allegation that the Independence of Swaziland was guaranteed to the Swazis is unfounded. Under the Convention in question the two Powers interested each pledged itself to the other not to interfere in Swaziland without the assent of the other. As a matter of fact the independence of the Swazis has practically ceased to exist since 1888. I would point out that under the new Convention, Swaziland is not incorporated in the South African Republic; and that the King of Swaziland will remain Paramount Chief of the Swazis in Swaziland with the usual powers of such Paramount Chief. The management of the internal affairs of the Natives shall be in accordance with their own laws and customs, and the Native laws and customs will be administered by the Native Chiefs entitled to administer the same, in so far as the said laws and customs are not inconsistent with civilised laws and customs; and the Natives are guaranteed in their continued use and occupation of land now in their possession, and of all grazing or agricultural rights to which they are at present entitled. Further, a special officer will be appointed by the South African Republic to administer Swaziland who will be selected in communication with the High Commissioner. Finally, a British Consul will be appointed to reside in Swaziland.

*Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Belfast, W.) asked—(1) whether, in the event of the Boers using force to subjugate our former allies, Her Majesty's Government would permit British subjects or persons of English birth to be forcibly trepanned and compelled to take part in the military operations against their will, as was the case on a recent occasion; and (2) whether, in the event of British subjects offering armed assistance to the Swazis in the protection of their liberties, they would be violating any Act of Parliament.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: The last paragraph of the question involves a legal matter which I could not deal with without notice. The rest of the question is purely hypothetical, and the hon. Member would hardly expect me to answer the points raised *seriatim*. As to whether British subjects will be commandeered for any expedition against the Swazis or anyone else, the hon. Member must be fully aware that under the terms of the Convention which we have negotiated with the South African Republic British subjects are practically exempt from compulsory commandeering.

*Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER: Do I understand, then, that prior to the Convention it would have been within the power of the Boers legally to commandeer British subjects.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: I do not think this arises out of the original question. If the hon. Member wants information, I may say that, until the new Convention, which we negotiated the other day, British subjects were liable to be commandeered, but by the Convention they are now exempted.

Sir G. BADEN-POWELL asked whether the Convention required any ratification, and, if so, whether it had been ratified by the Volksraad?

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: It will ultimately require ratification by the Volksraad, but we have the assurances not only of President Krüger, but of the Volksraad, that the Convention, which has been signed, will come into force and remain in force until ratified by the Volksraad, which ratification we expect will take place in a month or so.

*Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT asked whether the hon. Gentleman was understood to say that the Government of Great Britain was precluded by Treaty from protecting the Swazis or assuming a Protectorate over them?

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: That is so. In March 1890, the late Mr. W. H. Smith, then Leader of the House, was questioned on the subject, and he said it would be a breach of Article 12 of the Convention of 1884 to establish a British Protectorate over Swaziland without the consent of the South African Republic.

*Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT asked whether the Boers were not equally bound by the Conventions of 1881 and 1884 not to interfere with the independence of the Swazis?

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: Certainly. They are bound not to interfere without the assent of Her Majesty's Government.

*Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT asked whether in view of the statement just made, and the fact that the freedom of some 70,000 people was now at stake, the British Government would allow the Boers to subjugate Swaziland by force.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: It is a hypothetical question, which, as I have already said, I cannot answer.

***Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT**: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I must press for an answer. The question is not hypothetical.

WORK IN THE TELEGRAPH FACTORIES.

Mr. D. A. THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil): I beg to ask the Postmaster General, if he will state the percentage reduction in the hours to be worked by the men employed in the Telegraph Factories of Holloway and Mount Pleasant from 1st March next over those worked now; whether the hours under the new system will be the same each day throughout the year; what will be the maximum hours (including meal times) in any one day from the commencement to the leaving off of work; and, whether overtime will be allowed under any circumstances?

Mr. A. MORLEY: Speaking generally, the reduction in the hours to be worked by the men employed in the Telegraph Factories at Holloway and Mount Pleasant is from 54 to 48 hours per week, being about 11 per cent. As far as I can at present say, the hours will be the same each day from Monday to Friday throughout the year, with a short day on Saturday. The maximum hours, excluding overtime, but including an hour for dinner, will not exceed 9¾ at either factory; but I cannot bind myself to any precise details at present. The hon. Member will see that I could not undertake that overtime will not in any circumstances be worked, but it is intended to avoid it as far as possible.

THE CROFTERS' ACT.

Sir D. H. MACFARLANE (Argyll): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, if he proposes to postpone the introduction of the Bill to amend the Crofters' Act until after the publication of the Report of the Deer Forest Commission; and, if so, will he explain on what grounds?

The SECRETARY for SCOTLAND (Sir G. O. Trevelyan, Glasgow, Bridgeton): I do not propose to introduce the Bill to amend the Crofters' Act until after the publication of the Report. The Commission has, with great expenditure of time and labour, made a complete survey of the seven counties, and have obtained in the course of so doing a thorough acquaintance with the condition of the Highlands. Their Report, and the maps which accompany it, will be of great value, and fresh legislation on the Crofter question should not be laid before the House until the Report is in the hands of Members.

INSPECTION OF MINES.

Mr. D. A. THOMAS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, in view of the extent of the districts over which the present inspectors of coal mines in South Wales and Monmouthshire exercise supervision, the especially dangerous character of the collieries in those districts, and the very large number of persons employed, he will consider the advisability of appointing sub-assistant inspectors of mines from amongst the workmen to assist the inspectors in their duties?

***The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT** (Mr. G. W. E. Russell, North Beds): My hon. Friend asked a similar question to this last August, when the Secretary of State told him that he had appointed two men of practical experience as workmen to be assistant inspectors of quarries and metalliferous mines; that he could not then go further; but, although he could not give any pledge as to the future, he would give full consideration to his and other representations on the subject. I am sorry that I cannot at present add anything to what was then said by the Secretary of State.

THE LIGHT RAILWAY ACT 1889.

Mr. R. A. YERBURGH: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether three routes for a proposed Light Railway from Belmullet to Ballina have been surveyed, only one of which has been condemned, and that on the ground of expense; and, whether, seeing that such a Light Railway would open up the harbours of Broadhaven and Blacksod, either of the said harbours being capable of accommodating a large fleet of first-class battleships, he will, in view of the advantages, local and Imperial, which such railway offers, recommend its being constructed?

*MR. D. CRILLY (Mayo, N.), asked, whether the Bill to be introduced on the 21st inst., by the President of the Board of Trade, giving facilities for the formation of Light Railways in Great Britain, would be applicable to Ireland; and, if so, when was there a likelihood of Light Railways being constructed under its provisions?

*SIR JOHN HIBBERT: I am not acquainted with the circumstances stated in the first paragraph, and as the notice has been so short, I have not had time to make inquiries; but I may say that, so far as the Government is concerned, the funds under the Light Railways Act 1889 are exhausted, and I could not hold out hope of assistance to such a line as is mentioned. I am informed that the Bill about to be introduced by the Government will not apply to Ireland.

MR. CRILLY asked whether, before the introduction of the Bill, in view of the distress in Ireland, and the great demand for the construction of Light Railways, the facilities offered for their construction in Great Britain would be extended to Ireland?

MR. J. MORLEY, replied that the conditions of Ireland were so entirely different from those of other parts of the Kingdom, that he was afraid it was quite impossible.

FLOODS IN THE THAMES VALLEY.

VISCOUNT CURZON (Bucks, Wycombe): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade, whether the Government propose to institute any inquiry into the recent disastrous floods in the Thames Valley, with a view to ascertaining what steps can be taken for their prevention or diminution in future; and, whether they are aware that the powers at present invested in the Thames Conservancy are inadequate for the purpose?

MR. BRYCE: I understand that the Thames Conservancy Board have the whole matter under consideration. They held a public meeting last week at Maidenhead, and are holding another to-morrow at Windsor; but it is a fact, as the noble Viscount suggests, that they are not a Flood Authority. In these circumstances no Government Inquiry as is suggested is proposed?

FISHERY ACCOMMODATION AT INVER, COUNTY DONEGAL.

MR. J. G. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland—(1) whether he is aware that, in response to a memorial sent to the Fishery Board by the fishermen of Inver, County Donegal, setting forth the benefit that would accrue to the locality by the erection of a pier and the deepening of the river mouth at the landing-place at Inver, the Inspectors of Fisheries held a Court of Inquiry at Inver in 1884 to investigate the merits of this application; (2) whether he is aware that, later in the same year, an eminent engineer from Edinburgh visited Inver at the request of the Government, and that an announcement was made in the Press in the Autumn of 1885 that the recommendations of the Inspectors of Fisheries and the Government Engineer were favourable, and that Inver had been placed on the list of localities which were specially recommended for piers to be constructed by the Government; and (3) whether, having regard to the distress prevalent in Inver from the failure of the potato crop, the Government will be able, with a view to the giving employment on works of public utility, to make arrangements for the construction of the pier which was recommended ten years ago.

MR. J. MORLEY: The memorial referred to was forwarded to the Fishery Piers and Harbour Commission appointed under the Act 46 and 47 Vict., cap. 26, and was duly inquired into. That body had a certain sum of money only at its disposal, and in making out a list of works in order of importance, to which the money should be allotted, the case of Inver was excluded. With regard to the last paragraph I am informed by the Local Government Board, that it is not anticipated that it will become necessary to supplement the machinery of the ordinary Poor Law by the opening of Relief Works at Inver; but I may point out to my hon. and learned friend that the Congested Districts Board have undertaken the construction of a Pier at Port, a couple of miles from Inver, and that this work is now in the hands of the Contractor.

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY TRANSFERS.

MR. TIMOTHY M. HEALY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, if he is aware that dissatisfaction exists in the Royal Irish Constabulary at the system of transfer which prevails in the Munster counties: and, could he give the total cost to the country of such transfers since this Government took Office?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Inspector General of Constabulary informs me he is not aware that any dissatisfaction exists in the force respecting transfers in the counties of Munster, or elsewhere. Removals may become necessary by the exigencies of the service, such as filling up of vacancies caused by retirement or discharge, and such cannot be avoided; or they may be carried out upon the application of individual members seeking transfer. But the orders of the force require that men shall not be removed unnecessarily, as their "local knowledge" becomes lost by frequent changes. If my hon. and learned Friend would specify the class of transfer to which he refers, it would be possible to obtain the cost of them during the period mentioned; but to do so would entail an amount of clerical labour upon the force that would not be commensurate with results?

MR. T. M. HEALY: Will the right hon. Gentleman say whether a man who, it is proposed, shall be removed for the good of the Service, has any means of making an appeal or representation to the Inspector General?

MR. J. MORLEY: I take it he would, under those circumstances, press his claims on the District Inspector, and possibly on the County Inspector. I will not answer positively, but I will inquire whether there is a direct appeal from the Constable concerned to the Inspector General.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Will the right hon. Gentleman also inquire whether there is any case on record in which the Inspector General has over-ruled the desire of the County or District Inspector for transfer?

MR. J. MORLEY: I think I could find a case in my own experience, but I will inquire.

THE EXTRA POLICE IN COUNTY CLARE.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what steps are being taken to relieve County Clare from the tax for extra police, and what is the total amount of the impost for extra police in Clare since 1881?

MR. W. H. K. REDMOND: Before the right hon. Gentleman answers this question I would ask him if it is not the same question which I put, and which the right hon. Gentleman answered last Thursday?

MR. J. MORLEY: I do not see any substantial difference between the answer I have to give to-day and the answer I gave on the last occasion. A proposed reduction of 25 men of the extra force in County Clare has been approved by Government. Of this number a reduction of 10 men takes effect from 1st instant, and the remaining 15 will be reduced by 31st March 1895. This reduction of 25 men is equivalent to a relief of about £800 per annum to the County. The total amount charged to County Clare for extra police from Spring Assizes 1891 to Spring Assizes 1895, both inclusive, is about £73,000.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I apologise to the hon. Member for County Clare, who thinks I have been taking his question. I may say that I have been asking this question for the last ten years.

RESULT FEES.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that, in cases where Irish teachers are required to refund (1) over-payments of results fees owing to clerical errors in the Education Office, they are obliged to pay commission on their money orders, and if this commission could be allowed them as in the case of payment for requisites; (2) is he aware that under present regulations the total amount of results fees earned in a school is not always paid, deductions being forfeited for causes such as absence of teachers from duties owing to prolonged illness; and would he consider whether the amount earned by the pupils might be given to some of the teachers employed in any school so concerned; (3) and, have any arrangements yet been made whereby marks for efficient school keeping will count in the case of candidates for promotion under the Irish National Board of Education?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The Commissioners do not insist on charging the teachers the commission on their money orders in such cases. They will see that in future no teacher shall be charged with the commission on his money order where the refund is called for in consequence of any clerical error in the Office, and not in consequence of errors on the part of the teachers themselves. As regards the second paragraph, the practice is to allow the results fees in full to those members of the school staff who carry on the school business during intervals of absence of other members exceeding a month without a substitute, except for *special* subjects where instruction was not given by duly certificated teachers during illness of the absent teacher. The reply to the concluding paragraph is in the negative.

THE ASSESSMENT OF GRANTS FOR SCHOOLS.

Mr. E. F. VESEY KNOX (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in view of the announcement of the Vice-President of the Council, promising to instruct the Inspectors that in assessing the grants they should judge leniently schools now shortly to be inspected whose efficiency had been temporarily impaired owing to irregular attendance caused by the recent inclement weather, he will advise the National Board to issue similar instructions to Inspectors in Ireland?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I have communicated with the National Board in reference to the point urged by my hon. Friend, but have not heard from them. I understand, however, that the Commissioners have always made it an invariable rule to consider exceptional circumstances of a temporary nature, such as the severity of the weather, in applying the regulation as to prescribed average school attendance.

DUBLIN BOTANIC GARDENS.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: I beg to ask the Vice President of the Council if he has arranged during the Recess, as promised last Session, for the extension of the hours during which the Dublin

Botanic Gardens will be open to the public, so that they may be the same on Sundays and other days as in the case of Kew Gardens; and, if the wages of the Garden employés will consequently be increased to the English scale?

Mr. ACLAND: I have arranged that from the 1st April next the Dublin Botanic Gardens shall be open till 7 p.m. instead of 6 p.m. A small addition to the staff will be made; the hours of the gardeners and labourers will not be increased. The wages of those employed in the gardens have, however, been increased by sums varying from 1s. to 2s. a week.

THE COURSE OF BUSINESS.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): It might, perhaps, be for the convenience of the House if the right hon. Gentleman would tell us what business the Government propose to take on Thursday?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I understand that, unless there should be any exceptional interposition of any other subject, we shall take the First Reading of the Welsh Disestablishment Bill.

MOTIONS.

MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. S. Woods, Bill to restrict the Hours of Labour in Mines to Eight Hours per day.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday 6th March, and to be printed. [Bill 123.]

INTOXICATING LIQUORS (LICENCES) BILL.

On Motion of Sir Henry E. Roscoe, Bill to amend the Law relating to Licences for the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday 19th March, and to be printed. [Bill 124.]

WATERFORD INFIRMARY BILL.

On Motion of Mr. John E. Redmond, Bill for the Establishment of a Public Infirmary in the City of Waterford.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Monday 4th March, and to be printed. [Bill 125.]

INDUSTRIAL AND PROVIDENT SOCIETIES (PURCHASE OF FEE SIMPLE) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. James Rowlands, Bill to give Facilities to Industrial and Provident

Societies for the Purchase of the Fee Simple of their Holdings.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday 27th February, and to be printed. [Bill 126.]

COUNTY COUNCILLORS (QUALIFICATION OF WOMEN) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. A. Spicer, Bill to enable Women to be elected or to act as County Councillors.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 127.]

FACTORY AND WORKSHOP ACT (1891) AMENDMENT (No. 2) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. C. E. Schwann, Bill to amend the Factory and Workshop Act, 1891.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Monday 4th March, and to be printed. [Bill 128.]

GRAND JURIES (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. L. P. Hayden, Bill to amend the Grand Jury (Ireland) Laws.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 129.]

POOR LAW GUARDIANS QUALIFICATION (IRELAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Maurice Healy, Bill to amend the Law relating to the Qualification of Poor Law Guardians in Ireland.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday 2nd April, and to be printed. [Bill 130.]

CROFTERS' HOLDINGS (SCOTLAND) ACT (1886) AMENDMENT (No. 2) BILL.

On Motion of Dr. G. B. Clark, Bill to amend the Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Act, 1886.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Friday, and to be printed. [Bill 131.]

ARCHITECTS' REGISTRATION BILL.

On Motion of Mr. L. Atherley-Jones, Bill to provide for the Registration of Architects.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Monday 25th March, and to be printed. [Bill 132.]

ACCOUNTANTS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. L. Atherley-Jones, Bill to amend the Law relating to Accountants.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Monday 25th March, and to be printed. [Bill 133.]

EAST INDIA (MILITARY EXPENDITURE BEYOND THE FRONTIER).

Address for Return, prepared for the right hon. Member for South Aberdeen, showing Expenditure incurred out of the Revenues of India on the Construction of Railways and Roads, and on Military Expeditions and Explorations, and Subsidies to Native Chiefs beyond the West and North-west Frontier of India, from April 1882 to March 1891.—*(Sir W. Wedderburn.)*

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

POST OFFICE NOMINATIONS.

MR. LUTTRELL (Devon, Tavistock) moved—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, it is expedient that Post Office nominations, which are now made by the Treasury on the recommendation of Members of Parliament and others, should in future be made to the Postmaster General by local representative bodies."

In moving this Resolution he had no Party object in view, indeed, he was anxious to get rid of the Party patronage which at present existed. Post Office nomination was almost the last remnant of political patronage, and though political patronage was bad he considered that Party patronage was worse. Under the present system, if there be a Post Office under the value of £120 a year in England, and £100 in Scotland, vacant, it was for the Postmaster General to ask the Treasury for a nomination; and he believed it was the almost universal custom for the Treasury to send to a Member of Parliament in the Division in which the vacant Post Office was situated, and ask him to nominate, provided only that he be upon the same side as the Government. If there were no Member of Parliament in the Division on the same side as the Government, then they generally sent to a candidate or to some other supporter of the Government of the day. It was almost impossible, therefore, for the nomination to be otherwise than a piece of Party patronage, for while, no doubt, the nominator would be most careful to nominated a capable man he would take care that that man was a supporter of the cause he himself espoused. He (Mr. Luttrell) had not had much experience in making nominations, but what experience he had had taught him it was impossible to get rid of Party influences and considerations; where there were two men it was absolutely impossible not to name the Liberal in preference to the Conservative. The custom did not in any way rest upon law, and if one looked at history he found the custom was not one of great antiquity. Previous to 1784 the Post Office was in a disorganised state. Letters were then carried by boys on horseback called postboys. The boys rode from public house to public house, and in those days the Post Offices were really public-houses, and the patrons were the brewers or the landlords ; in fact, there was then no patronage in the possession of the State. In 1784, a great improvement was made in our Post Office system. In that year John Palmer, of Bath, started the running of mail coaches, and they were able to carry much more than the postboys. The public-houses gave way to Post Offices, and the Postmasters General—for there were then two—had the patronage pure and simple. In 1821, a certain Lord Chichester, who was one of the Postmasters General, allowed his power of appointing to Post Offices to lapse to the Treasury, and having got hold of the patronage, the Treasury held it with a firm hand. In 1854, a Committee reported against allowing the Treasury to have the power of appointment, and in favour of that power being vested in the Postmaster General. The outcome of that Committee was, that a change was made and certain Post Offices were handed back to the Postmaster General ; the appointment to Post Offices over the value of £175 a year was then given to the Postmaster General, while the Treasury retained the appointment to Post Offices under £175 a year. In 1859, another change was made, inasmuch as the value of the Post Offices to which the Treasury could appoint was reduced to £120, and at that figure it now stood. In 1878, there were still further powers of veto upon nominations given to the Postmaster General. At the time when Lord John Manners was Postmaster General a Treasury minute was framed as follows :

> "These nominations will be submitted to the approval of the Postmaster General, who has a right of cancelling any nomination if the character of the nominee is not satisfactory, or if his residence is inconveniently situated, and if such appointment will not lead to the interest of the public service."

Only last year, when the Local Government Act was under discussion, he asked the Postmaster General and Patronage Secretary to the Treasury whether, in view of the extension of Local Government, they would agree to hand over the powers they possessed in this matter to local representative bodies. The answers he received were very encouraging to those who desired to see political patronage taken away from Members of Parliament. Both hon. Gentlemen very rightly said they must be guided by the opinion of the House. It was on account of those answers that he now proposed his Resolution. His proposal was, that in all cases of vacancy in sub-offices and post offices the Postmaster General should ask for a nomination from a Local Representative Body. He did not actually prescribe what local representative body the right hon. Gentleman should refer to, but he took it that in the case of a parish the Postmaster General would refer to the Parish Council, in the case of a larger district to the District Council, and in the case of a town to the Town Council. Some persons suggested that the power of appointment should be handed over to the Post Office, but the difficulties in the way were, in his opinion, almost insurmountable. One difficulty was pointed out in a Treasury Minute founded upon the Report of the Committee of 1854. It was there shown that it would be inapplicable in all cases where post offices were held in connection with private businesses. There were also administrative difficulties. One Surveyor was responsible for the whole of the Western Counties, That gentleman had his headquarters at Bath, but his district stretched from Bath down to the Scilly Isles, a distance of 180 miles. It would be absolutely impossible for such a man to make a good appointment, and by that he meant an appointment which the people would make if they had the opportunity of making one. It would be impossible for that man to find out what the feelings of the people in the locality were. Therefore, it was far better that nominations should be had from some local representative body who would know the wants and the wishes of the people. He had not brought forward this Motion animated by Party motives. He was glad to know that there were some questions in regard to which Members of Parliament were not too closely bound by Party ties, nor too rigidly divided by Party distinctions. This was one of those questions. It was a question which should link them all closely together, for its object was to serve the interests of the public service of the country. He begged to move his Motion.

MR. J. RANKIN (Herefordshire, Leominster) said, he seconded the Motion because he thought it was anomalous that the servants of one of the great Departpartments of the State should be appointed by another Department of the State. He thought, also, that the Post Office was a Department that should be as much as possible in touch with all its servants, many of whom lived remote from the Central Authority; and he believed that closer union would be obtained if the Motion were adopted. Those nominations by Members of Parliament were open to the charge of being Party nominations, and, undoubtedly, they were generally regarded in that light. That was not the best kind of method for appointing the servants of a great State Department; and he would be glad to see it done away with. But it would not be altogether a good thing to take away from the districts all interest in the persons appointed to those offices. The Post Office was becoming more and more important to the social welfare of the people. There were not only such matters as letters, telegrams, telephones, savings-bank business, and money orders attended to by that Institution—he hoped before long that a system of Old Age Pensions would also be established, and that the Post Office would be the agency through which it would be worked—but it also was the means of transmitting to the people much useful information, as, for example, information to intending emigrants about the Colonies and other countries abroad. It was, therefore, desirable that the local authorities should have some say in those appointments, and he knew no better bodies for the purpose than the Parish Councils and the District Councils. As every parish had a post office, he would place the appointments of sub-postmasters in the Parish Council, and those of letter-carriers—who, as a rule, had each two or more parishes in this sphere of work—in the District Councils. He thought it would be a very good thing, if it were possible to do so, to increase the pay of sub-postmasters, for at present the remuneration was so small that it was exceedingly difficult to get good men for the posts. He also threw out a suggestion that a Parish Council or a District Council should be allowed to become guarantors where a telegraph office was sought to be set up. There was a parish in his electoral district for the County Council, so remote and with so few persons of any wealth in it, that it was found impossible to find the required personal guarantee, and of course the telegraph office was not established, though it was most desirable that the parish should have one, being so far remote from any railway station. There would be no difficulty in that case in raising the guarantee if the Parish Council were allowed to give it, and he therefore suggested to the Postmaster General that some Amendment to bring about that result should be made in the Parish Councils Act.

CAPTAIN J. SINCLAIR (Dumbartonshire) agreed with the hon. Members who had urged the acceptance of the Motion on the House, that the present system of nomination to those minor positions in the Postal Service had many objections, but he was not convinced that the remedy they proposed was the best. It was open to doubt whether any advantage would be gained by putting the appointments in the hands of local representative bodies. In the first place, he was inclined to doubt whether local representative bodies would like to have this duty thrown upon them. It was like bringing a steam-hammer into play to crack a nut. In the second place, if local representative bodies had the making of the appointments he doubted whether the change would do away with the influence of Party spirit which at present controlled the appointments. It seemed to him that the true solution of the difficulty was, to place the appointments in the hands of the Postmaster General; and he therefore moved as an Amendment to the Motion to leave out after the word "may" to the end of the sentence, in order to insert "by the Postmaster General in the same way as other appointments in his Department."

*SIR C. CAMERON (Glasgow, College), in seconding the Amendment, said that as far back as 1878 he brought this subject before the House, and moved a Resolution that the appointments should be transferred to the Postmaster General.

At that time a striking illustration of the unpleasant working of this system of patronage had been made public. A correspondence, in which a Member of the House figured, was published in relation to one of those Post Office appointments. It appeared from the explanation of the hon. Gentleman concerned that a tradesman approached him with a view to getting a nomination for the appointment, and said to him: "If you will do this I will promise to vote for you at your election." For some reason or another the hon. Gentleman did not nominate that person, but nominated some other person, who was one of his supporters. As the hon. Baronet the Member for Cockermouth said at the time—

> "The hon. Gentleman had a satisfactory explanation. He nominated an honest Tory who had voted for him, instead of a humbug who promised to vote for him if appointed."

He would hand over all these posts to the Postmaster General; the nominations were nothing but a nuisance to Members of Parliament. It was bad enough for them when their party was in power; but when it was out of power, and they could do nothing for the applicants, it was still more unpleasant. There was no reason for this exceptional treatment of certain Postmasterships, and for the infliction on Members of Parliament of a system of persecution by the retention of an obsolete piece of patronage. The power of appointment by the Postmaster General was found to work admirably in respect to all other posts. He begged to second the Amendment.

Mr. M. BIDDULPH (Herefordshire, Ross) said that the original Motion would be so disastrous to the public service, if carried, that he was bound to protest against it. The present system of appointments was very bad, but to hand the power over to a number of public bodies would make bad infinitely worse. The Postmaster General, who was responsible for the postal service, was the proper person to make the appointments. He should support the Amendment.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. A. Morley, Nottingham, E.) said that there seemed, from the Debate, to be a general disapproval of the existing system; and therefore he would only deal with that system so far as to correct a few inaccuracies made by the hon. Member for Herefordshire. The hon. Member spoke of the appointments to a great Department of the State being made by another Department. As a matter of fact the appointment rested with the Postmaster General, and must rest with him whatever system was adopted. It was only the nomination or recommendation which could come from the Treasury or the Local Authority or a Member of Parliament. The hon. Member also mentioned the question of letter carriers. That question did not come into the discussion at all; because some time ago that matter was removed from the Treasury altogether, and the appointments were now made by the Postmaster General, and quite apart from all political considerations. In respect to letter carriers, priority was given to Army and Navy men over all other subjects, except those who had departmental claims arising from previous service. The veto of the Postmaster General on the nominations from the Treasury was frequently exercised. There were certain exceptions to the people qualified to act as sub-postmasters; and, whatever system was ultimately adopted, these exceptions must, in the main, continue to exist. Minors, keepers of inns and publichouses, rate-collectors, vaccination officers, school-attendance officers, licensed grocers in Scotland, and agents for parcels delivery, banking businesses, or anything which would bring the private business into competition with the Post Office were excepted. So far as he was concerned, his action in this matter had been consistent. As a private Member in the Parliament of 1880, whenever he received an application for nomination he sent it to the Local Authority of the Borough, and asked the Officials to recommend the fittest person for the appointment which had to be made. When he was at the Treasury in 1886 he did his best to bring about, with the approval of the right hon. Member for Midlothian, an arrangement which would have been something on the lines of the proposal now before the House; and now, as head of the Post Office, he was willing to fall in with a new arrangement which would meet the approval of the House of Commons. It was essentially a question which affected the members of the House of Commons themselves, and the Government would concur in carrying out the general feeling of the House. The considerations which had always influenced him in exercising the veto, had been for the interest of the Post Office. It was necessary that the situation selected should be the most suitable for the district, and that the man appointed should have the confidence of the people whom he had to serve, and among whom he worked. He himself believed that these conditions would be better observed by the Local Authority than under the present system or by the Post Office. The suggestion that the appointments should be transferred to the Postmaster General was complimentary to the Department; and if there was a general feeling in the House in favour of that suggestion, the Postmaster General would have to undertake the burden. But he could assure the House that the position of the Postmaster General at the present time was by no means easy. He was at the head of an enormous Department, which was rapidly growing. The number of sub-postmasterships in England and Wales (exclusive of London) was 13,407, and in Scotland it was 1,864, making a total of over 15,200; and he looked with apprehension on the transfer of all these appointments to an already overburdened Minister.

MR. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): Will the right hon. Gentleman give the figures for Ireland?

MR. A. MORLEY said that the number of these posts in Ireland was 2,603; but under the present system the appointments in Ireland were made by the Postmaster General. Therefore the adoption of the Amendment would assimilate the system in Great Britain to that which obtained in Ireland; but it would seriously increase the duties and responsibilities of the Department, and he doubted very much whether it would be wise to add such a burden. The proposal, whether adopted in its original or in its amended form, should be confined in its operation to Great Britain. The Government wished to leave the question to be decided by the House without any Party pressure being exercised. He had expressed his own personal wish for the original Motion; but the Government would accept the decision of the House of Commons in either case.

*MR. W. L. JACKSON (Leeds, N.) thought that, after what had fallen from the right hon. Gentleman, the House might properly give him some guidance. Speaking from his experience at the Treasury, he was strongly of opinion that there was only one course which ought to be adopted, and that was that those who paid should appoint. The Postmaster General ought to have the responsibility; and even if he were already greatly shirking burdened, it was no reason for this responsibility. The transfer would hardly increase the work of the Postmaster General so greatly as the right hon. Gentleman had suggested, because he already had the duty of approving of every one of these appointments and must satisfy himself as to the fitness of the persons recommended. This could not occupy more time when the recommendations came from his own Officers in the districts, who could not possibly have any other object than to serve the public to the best advantage. He was sure that every Member of the House would agree that our Postmasters, whether in large or small offices, ought to be absolutely free from all Party bias on one side or the other. He had heard in some cases that there had, for instance, been suspicions at election times that the circulars of one political Party were delivered more promptly than the circulars of another Party. He was quite sure that this ought not to occur in any public Department of the State. The numbers which the Postmaster General had given showing that this question applied to more than 15,000 offices, was in itself a sufficient answer to the suggestion that it should be left to any authority except that of the responsible Department with which they were connected. The right hon Gentleman had referred to the letter-carriers. They were not included, however, in this Motion. An alteration had been made with reference to the letter-carriers by the right hon. Gentleman's predecessor in Office, who had done much to benefit the men connected with the Army Reserve Forces. He was sure that the system had given great satisfaction, and that it was working very satisfactorily. He hoped that the House would place the responsibility where it ought to rest—namely, with the Department responsible for carrying it out.

*SIR A. K. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) said, it was eminently desirable, both in the interest of the State and of Members of Parliament, that this remnant of political patronage should be got rid of. He hoped that when the reform was made a similar form of patronage in connection with Customs boatmen would be abolished according to the present precedent. The only question now was whether the transfer should be made to the Postmaster General or whether the appointments should be conferred on the Local Authorities. He had great respect for the experience of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Leeds, but he was opposed to the view he had taken of this matter. Though the Postmaster General would be the paymaster, and as such might be expected to appoint, the right hon. Gentleman would still make the appointments, though the Local Authorities might enjoy the nominations. He thought, on the whole, that the Local Authority was to be preferred. He felt no distrust whatever as to the exercise of their powers. This was a distinctly local question, a question on which the immediate interests of the locality ought be consulted, and with reference to which the locality itself must know what is likely to be the best appointment. The local postmastership was a combination of official duty with a business or a trade; and it was almost impossible for the Postmaster General to be as well informed as the Local Authority of the varying requirements and needs of its own district. The more the Post Office added to its duties the more must this become a question of local and personal knowledge as to the applicants for such a position. The reason of the present patronage of Members of Parliament was to secure such local knowledge, and the effect of the transfer to the Postmaster General would not decrease their solicitation, but only change the quarter from the Treasury to the Post Office. He pointed out a precedent which applied in the case of much more important duties—namely, the reference which the Lord Chancellor always made to Town Councils in respect of Borough Justices. But there were two considerations more important than all. There was a growing difficulty in connection with the large public Departments of the State and the employment of labour. The right hon. Gentleman would feel that one of the great objections to the inclusion by the State of this duty must be that it would largely add to State employment. There was already a good deal of discontent even in the best Civil Service in the world, which was sometimes disadvantageous to the public service. This was another reason for intrusting these duties to those on the spot, and thus dividing responsibility instead of concentrating it on one Department. The question was one of centralisation or decentralisation; and on all grounds he was for the latter. The object of arrangements in connection with local postmasterships should be to satisfy the requirements and to suit the convenience of the localities, and it was in a locality that the best knowledge would be found to exist of how the duties should be performed.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.) said he had also full confidence in local administration, but he differed entirely from the view of the last speaker. The hon. Gentleman was under some misapprehension when he sought a parallel in the appointment of magistrates. As far as he knew, no Lord Chancellor had ever consented to ask Town Councils or Local Authorities for nominations to the bench of magistrates.

Sir A. K. ROLLIT: I did not say nominations; but I say that names are submitted.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN said that was a different state of things. What some Lord Chancellors had done was to settle and send a list of persons whom they thought fit to be appointed, and before making the appointment, they had allowed the Town Council to make any objection as to fitness which might be known to the Local Authority and not previously known to the Lord Chancellor. It was only to that extent the Local Authority had been consulted. His point, however, was this. Here was a political nomination which hon. Members were all, for sufficient reasons, very anxious to get rid of. The House ought not to put that political nomination on the Local Authority. He agreed with hon. Members opposite that, hitherto, the nominations made by Local Authorities had been made almost without a suspicion of political corruption, but that was surely because, in all these cases, the Local Authorities had the responsibility for the work of the officer they had appointed. It was suggested, however, that the House should give to the Local Authorities the nomination for postmasterships, which would be practically the appointment of officers for whose subsequent work they would have no responsibility whatever. The House ought to guard, to the best of its power, the character of Local Authorities, and it ought not to put in their way what undoubtedly might, in some cases, be a temptation. He, therefore, supported the Amendment.

*MR. H. E. KEARLEY (Devonport) said, he had enjoyed some experience of these appointments during the past few years. It was with some surprise that, early in his political career, he received a communication from the Treasury, asking for a nomination to a local postmastership. He had no idea then that such a practice was prevalent; and, seeing that he possessed no local knowledge suitable to guide him in making a selection, he sent the Treasury request to the local people, and asked the chairman of the Liberal Association to select the most suitable person quite apart from any political bias. The wife of the Secretary of the Association was nominated, against which he protested, as he did not wish to be associated with anything which might be considered political jobbery; but he was assured that the nominee was thoroughly suited to the duties of the office, and he felt bound to say that the appointment had proved satisfactory in every respect. When he mentioned to the Post Office officials his objections, he was told in affect "to cheer up, and be easy in his mind," and that it was hardly worth while to raise objections to a good old custom. The next case was in reference to a new Post Office which was to be opened in a particular street. The inhabitants asked the Postmaster General to sanction the proposal, and he believed that an inquiry was held. It was ultimately agreed that a Post Office should be opened, and he had the privilege of the nomination. Here again he sought local aid. He was surprised, however, to find out a few weeks afterwards that a person had been appointed who did not live in the street for which the office had been demanded. The third case was that of an outlying district, where a vacancy had occurred, with a large salary attached to the appointment. He had become wiser by this time, and had arrived at the conclusion that those appointments were political in their nature; therefore "he took the bull by the horns" and handed the affair over to the Liberal Association. There were 40 applicants for the vacancy, including the chairman, secretary, treasurer, and two members of the executive of the local Association. But his colleague inadvertently made a direct nomination to the Treasury which they accepted, and he had to bear the protests and complaints of the 40 disappointed ones. This patronage was objectionable in every way. It made more enemies than friends, and he hoped it would be swept away. He had set before the House these examples of the evil effects of the system, because these actual cases were worth a ton of theory.

MR. C. DIAMOND (Monaghan, N.) said, that in Ireland they had to some extent been relieved of the responsibilities of making appointments of this character. He thought they required to have it made illegal for any Member of Parliament to make any nomination or recommendation whatever; nothing short of that he thought would meet the case. Under the present state of things Members of Parliament were besieged with applications for appointments.

*SIR W. HART DYKE (Kent, Dartford) said, that he happened to be presiding over the patronage and destinies of the Treasury when the hon. Member for Glasgow brought forward a motion on the subject in 1878. The question then debated was a very difficult and intricate one, and he did not think its difficulties had diminished since that date. There was no doubt that there was some truth in what had been urged by the Postmaster General—that were this patronage entirely thrown upon his hands it would grealy add to his responsibilities. This Debate would emphasise the necessity for an immediate change in the present scheme of patronage. There was not a single hon. Member in the House who had a good word to say for it. When this question was mooted before, Lord John Manners made a very good offer to the House; he stated that if it were clearly shown that this transfer to himself and his Department would be to the public benefit, he would cheerfully agree to be sacrificed and undertake the additional work. He hoped that sufficient pressure could be brought to bear upon the Postmaster General in induce him to adopt that course and take over this work. He pressed him the more to do so on account of the mistaken alternative which had been proposed of handing this patronage over to local bodies. In the case of the new Parish Councils, for example, could there be anything more miserable than that, in some obscure village, because there happened to be a post office vacancy the whole of the elections should turn sometimes, perhaps, upon who should be appointed to it? There was another reason why the appointments should not be handed over to these bodies, and that was the difficulty that would arise if a vacancy occurred when they were not meeting; were special meetings to be summoned for the appointment of postmasters? The best thing that the Postmaster General and the Department—with whom, after all, the ultimate appointments rested—could do was to take the whole matter into their hands.

Mr. A. MORLEY said, the question was essentially one for the House of Commons to determine, but whatever decision the House of Commons came to, he should loyally abide by it. The question before the House in 1878, when Lord John Manners was Postmaster General, was identical with that which they were now discussing, but, although the noble Lord was willing to accept the decision of the House, he opposed it on the grounds that he considered the existing system was the best in the interests of the Public Service.

Mr. T. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said, they must all feel very glad that the Postmaster General took such a high-minded view of his duty in the matter, but he was sorry that he had not made the alteration of his own motion two years ago, when he came into office. It was most discreditable that this remnant of official jobbery should still exist. He cited a case in which an appointment had been made, not by the Postmaster General, not by the Secretary to the Treasury, not by a Member of Parliament, but by a Radical candidate. That was constantly happening. He ventured to say that if any Member sitting on the same side of the House as himself, were to write to the Secretary for the Treasury for a postmastership, he would be told that the applications from Liberal Members were so numerous that this particular application from a Tory Member could not be entertained. These appointments were really part of the work of the Postmaster General, and if it was too much for one Postmaster General let there be two, and let them divide the salary.

Mr. C. B. STUART-WORTLEY, (Sheffield, Hallam) said, there was a suspicion in his mind that, while the Postmaster General was going tentatively to accept the transfer, he had the intention by administrative practice of surrendering it practically to the local bodies by consulting them in every case. He respectfully asked him to set the minds of hon. Members at rest upon that point. He did not bind himself to consent to any such practice as that. He had very grave doubts whether by any system they could entirely eliminate politics from these appointments. He hoped that it would be made perfectly clear that those who voted for the Amendment did not make themselves responsible for its being nullified afterwards by administrative practice.

Sir D. H. MACFARLANE (Argyll) said he did not think the motion went far enough. The appointments should be placed wholly and entirely in the hands of the Postmaster General, and Members of Parliament should be prohibited altogether from taking any part whatever in the nominations or even from supporting them. If they were placed in the hands of the local authorities the local Member of Parliament would be in no better position in regard to the matter than at present, for in that case he would be solicited by floods of letters, and personally, if possible, to support the nomination of the County or Parish Council. The present system was rather a trouble and a nuisance to Members of Parliament than otherwise; it was the means of making for them more enemies than friends, and he, for one, should be glad if the power of nomination were taken out of their hands altogether.

*Mr. H. L. W. LAWSON (Gloucester, Cirencester) agreed that the duty of recommendation by hon. Members was an unpleasant and invidious one, and made them more enemies than friends. He would urge on the Postmaster General an opposite course to that suggested by the hon. Member for Sheffield. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would decide in future to consult the local authorities in cases of appointment, and that Members of Parliament would no longer be troubled in the matter. But, unless the recommendation or information given by the local authorities were relied upon by the Postmaster General, the result of the new system, so far as Members of Parliament were concerned, would be no better than the old. The form would be changed, the substance would be the same. As in the case of the appointment of magistrates the local authorities were consulted, so in the case of those appointments regard should be paid according to the Treasury Minute of 1854 to the convenience and interests of the local population. The best way to secure that result was through the local authorities. But, whatever was done, he hoped hon. Member and candidates for Parliament would be rid of this last remnant of political patronage—the obligation of making recommendations to those offices on political grounds.

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) said, it was amusing to note how virtuous hon. Members had suddenly become in relation to this matter, and for the curious reason, too, that they had discovered that the exercise of the patronage brought them more enemies than friends. Political bribery, of course, was a thing of the past, yet they all knew perfectly well that the whole system of the present Government was a system of political bribery in the biggest sense. He protested against the display of Pecksniffian virtue of certain hon. Members, who had themselves implied that there would be no objection to the patronage on their part if it brought more political friends than enemies.

SIR W. WEDDERBURN (Banffshire) thought the Amendment was altogether of a retrograde character; it would have a centralising effect and deprive the people of a voice in matters which largely affected their interests. He should, therefore, support the Motion.

MR. H. T. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN (Kent, Faversham) said, it was probable he was the only Member in the House who was of opinion that no adequate cause had been shown to interfere with the present system, and he was, therefore, unable to support either the Motion or the Amendment. In fact, he saw very little difference between them, for even if the Amendment were carried and the duty placed entirely in the hands of the Postmaster General, he would have to seek for information from some one as to the persons to be appointed, and to whom else could he go for it than the local authorities? The present system had not worked badly, and he did not think the patronage so much objected to by certain Members had been abused.

MR. J. W. CROMBIE (Kincardineshire) said, the efficiency of the Post Office should be the real point in view, and, therefore, the responsibility of the appointments should rest with the Department.

MR. W. THORBURN (Peebles and Selkirk) supported the Motion.

MR. LUTTRELL intimated that he was prepared to accept the Amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion, as Amended, put.

MR. W. L. JACKSON (Leeds, N.) asked whether the word "nominations" was the right word.

MR. ARNOLD MORLEY said, the proper word would be "appointments," and suggested that the Motion should be amended.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER said, the Motion could not now be amended. The only course was to withdraw the Resolution, as amended, and move it in the altered form.

Motion, as amended, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. A. MORLEY moved—

"That, in the opinion of this House, it is expedient that Post Office appointments to which nominations are now made by the Treasury on the recommendation of Members of Parliament should, in future, be made by the Postmaster General in the same way as other appointments in the Department."

Motion agreed to.

IMPORTATION OF FOREIGN PRISON-MADE GOODS.

*Colonel C. E. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) moved—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, it is incumbent upon Her Majesty's Government, in the interests of the industrial classes of the United Kingdom, at once to take steps to restrict the importation of goods made in Foreign Prisons by the forced labour of convicts and felons."

Hon. Members, he said, would not be unacquainted with the subject, and more especially those representing industrial constituencies. They would recollect that early last year a considerable sensation was caused by the revelations of a trade journal, *The Hardwareman*, published at Birmingham, on the matter. This paper sent a Commissioner to Germany, Mr. James Lancaster Pollit, and at his (the hon. Member's) instance his report had been embodied in a sworn affidavit. This document he had with him, and, if the House would allow him, he would read its more important paragraphs.

> "I, James Lancaster Pollitt, of 5, Gloucester Road, Kew, in the county of Surrey, do solemnly and sincerely declare—(1) That I was delegated by *The Hardwareman* journal as a special commissioner to inquire into the manufacture of goods in German Prisons, and that I proceeded to Germany with such intent in January 1894. (2) That upon January 25th I visited the Provincial Short Term Prison of Brauweiler (Cologne), and on January 31st the State Long Term Prison of Plotzen See (Berlin), and I learned that in those establishments the labour of the prisoners is hired out to manufacturers, called concessionaires, who supply their own raw material and the plant necessary for production, and who hire the prisoners' labour upon two systems:—(*a*) Whereunder they hire the prisoners from the authorities at rates varying from 3d. to 1s. per man per diem, according to the man's adaptability to the class of work he is required for; and (*b*) whereunder they take the finished article from the authorities and pay at an equivalent rate for the labour it has absorbed. (4) That I saw prisoners working upon English models, and learned from the officials and representatives of the concessionaires that they were turning out large numbers of brushes, whips, lamps and lanterns, candlesticks, cash boxes, spice boxes, birdcages, carpet sweepers, socks and stockings, wine bins, chair bedsteads, cots, garden chairs, jackets and mantles, sewing machine tables and covers, slippers, &c., for the English market. All of these, except jackets and mantles and sewing machine covers, I saw in course of process of manufacture, either in parts or the whole. (5) That I was informed by prison officials that the labour at more than twenty prisons in various parts of Germany is farmed out upon one of the two methods indicated as 'A' and 'B.' (6) That the goods made in these prisons find their way into England (firstly) through the concessionaire's English agent; (secondly) from that agent to a wholesale buyer, who is not informed that the goods are made in prison; and (thirdly) from the wholesale buyer to the shopkeeper, who is certainly kept in ignorance of their origin, even if the wholesale buyer has learned accidentally how they are made."

The proprietors of *The Manchester Examiner* had been at the same time informed, from a reliable source, that in German State prisons—

> "The spinning and weaving of cotton goods was extensively carried on, and the bales were actually fraudulently stamped with the names of Manchester firms."

It would be readily believed that the publication of this aggravated form of foreign competition had created considerable sensation among the industrial masses, who had begun seriously to feel the depression which had been prevalent since 1892. Questions had been addressed to right hon. Gentlemen opposite, not only by himself, but by other hon. Members, and by his right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham. He, the Mover, had taken infinite pains on the subject. He had written to the Member for Brightside, when President of the Board of Trade, and had sent him the card of one of the prison travellers bearing the legend, "R. & H., Manufacturers at the Convict Prison, Graudenz. Sole agent, S. A. R., St. E. C." He had shown him across the floor of the House samples of the brushes made in German prisons and being sold in Great Britain at less than half of the cost of British labour alone, while English, Scotch, and Irish brushmakers had been starving. It had been impossible to arouse the right hon. Gentleman. He declared he had nothing to do with International commodities. But wiser counsels prevailed, and the Foreign Office had communicated with Her Majesty's Ambassador in Berlin. Indeed, to give credit where credit was due, Lord Rosebery had done so, it now appeared, as early as February, without the Board of Trade knowing anything about it. But they had waited in vain all through last Session for the Report from Berlin. He had pressed the present President of the Board of Trade repeatedly, but without result, and he would not even send for Mr. Pollitt, the Commissioner of *The Hardwareman*, and learn the facts from him. He had said last Session that the Report had arrived from Berlin, and had charged the right hon. Gentleman with having had the Report put into a pigeon-hole, labelled "Not to be presented till Parliament rises." They had the Report now, and the date showed that he had been perfectly right. Sir Edward Malet's despatch, inclosing the very able Report of Mr. Tower, Second Secretary in Her Majesty's Embassy, had been received in London on June 24. Parliament did not rise for nearly two months afterwards, and the Report had only been issued to Members in December or January. If the President of the Board of Trade thought this trifling with the subject was approved by those whose industry was being ruined, he would undeceive him. The other Reports were entirely of a secondary character, and had not been asked for. The only important despatch received after June had been from Her Majesty's Ambassador in the United States. It narrated that the Laws of America ordained—

> "That the goods, wares, articles, and merchandise manufactured wholly or in part in any foreign country by convict labour, shall not be entitled to entry at any of the ports of the United States, and the importation thereof is prohibited; and the Secretary of the Treasury is authorised to prescribe such regulations as may be necessary for the enforcement of this provision."

He had called the attention of the President of the Board of Trade to this fact so long ago as the 29th of June, and, would it be believed, that the Minister responsible for the trade of this country with other countries, and the leading English authority on the American Constitution, declared—

> "that he had no information as to the practice of the Customs Authorities of the United States or Canada on the point referred to?"

He was wholly unable to induce Her Majesty's Government to move in the matter last year. He had therefore brought in a Bill of three lines excluding prison-made goods from importation, with the support of 12 Members from all parts of the House. It had been repeatedly blocked and mainly by the Member for Shipley, whose constituents, he knew, viewed his action with great disfavour. But, after all, it was the business of the Government to introduce and press forward Legislation of this character. It was useless having Committees to inquire into the distress through want of employment if these causes of industrial distress were left unremedied. The Reports from Her Majesty's Representatives in certain foreign countries on Prison Labour showed that there was strong ground for taking action apart from the emphatic resolution on the subject of the Trades Union Congress and the numerous petitions which had been presented to this House since the opening of Parliament. They were from Glasgow, Huddersfield, Dublin, Halifax, Bradford, Oldham, Preston, Worcester, Sheffield, and many other places—indeed, nearly every important town. Would the House permit him to call its attention to the startling character of the Report from Berlin? A recent answer of the President of the Board of Trade induced the conviction that he had not read the Reports. If he had not time to go through them in their entirety, it would be quite sufficient if he condescended to run his eye, as he could do in five minutes, through the very able summary published in the current number of the official *Labour Gazette*—a journal on the impartial compilation of which he heartily congratulated the Labour Department of the Board of Trade. It showed that there were three systems of prison labour in force abroad:—

> "(A)—The Contract System, under which the prison Authorities farmed out the labour of the prisoners to contractors who supplied materials, machinery, and foremen."
>
> (B)—The Régie System, under which the State supplied materials, tools, and machinery, the work being supervised by the prison officials.
>
> (C)—The Accord System, under which the control of the work was retained by the State, but the contractor supplied materials."

The average number of foreign prisoners employed under these three systems in reproductive work which eventually reached outside trade was—

> "In Prussia, Bavaria, Baden, and the Hungarian States, 29,200; in Saxony, 3,673; in Wurtemberg, 1,269; in Hamburg, 886; in France, 22,228,—a total on the European Continent, without counting Belgium, Switzerland, and Scandinavia, of 57,256."

To this enormous figure the United States of America added 45,277 prisoners, bringing up the official total of foreign felons competing with British labour to 102,533. The value of the work done by these prisoners in wages alone was estimated at nearly £6,000,000. In Prussia, Saxony, Wurtemberg, and Hamburg over £200,000 were paid in wages to prisoners, who received from ½d. to 2d. a day for themselves. In France £177,000, while the American estimate of the value of prison labour was £5,492,434. Now, the important thing was, how much of the products of this foreign prison labour came to the United Kingdom? The President of the Board of Trade applauded that. But at all events he, the Mover, knew as much, or more, on this subject than he did. The President of the Board of Trade had repeatedly assured the House last year that he had not been in communication with the Customs Authorities on the subject, and had seen no reason for so communicating. He had also averred that he could not tell which of the £68,000,000 worth of foreign manufactured goods annually imported were prison made and which were not. He, himself, had had the advantage of communication with manufacturers and workmen all over the country. They assured him that they were being much injured by this unfair competition, and, he thought, they knew their own business. Of course, the official informants of Her Majesty's diplomatic officers had not been so foolish as to give away the only market for their prison-made goods, The reports said—

> "To what extent the output of German prison labour is imported into the United Kingdom cannot be stated. The small merchants who buy may or may not export. To what extent any of the French prison manufactures are imported into the United Kingdom cannot be stated. What proportion of the American prison output reaches the United Kingdom does not appear."

This was all very well, and might have been expected. But when the German Minister of the Interior admitted that goods had been ordered in German prisons to have foreign marks put on them, when we had the testimony of our own countrymen whose interests were so vitally affected corroborating the Commissioner of *The Hardwareman*, our suspicions that Great Britain was their destination were more than aroused. It was confirmed by the difficulty of selling prison goods elsewhere. Mr. Tower said the prison work included cigar manufacture, machine knitting, basket weaving, cane-furniture making, brush making—863 in Prussia alone—cardboard work, portfolio making, fancy paper making, the manufacture of hemp sacks, cocoa matting, making felt and wooden shoes, button making, the manufacture of metal fittings, lamps, and copperware; in wood carving, in netting; in making toys, quincaillerie and tin soldiers; in wood, horn, and ivory turning; in making combs, umbrellas, sticks, picture frames, gold beading, iron screws, nails, and in miscellaneous fancy work. Where were the goods sold? The German Government had no means of knowing. Of course not, or rather it would not tell. But they knew how much opposition was being made in Germany against prison labour being applied to reproductive work as being an unfair competition with trades and industries. Mr. Tower wrote—

> "German carpenters, wood carvers, lock and tin smiths, fitters, plumbers, tailors, shoemakers, paper-makers, bookbinders, button-makers, lithographers, printers, and weavers make complaints."

When it was proved that the whole trade of artificial flowers was ruined by prison competition, the prison manufacture had been discontinued. The State required that the contractor should not sell within a ten kilometre radius (say between six and seven miles) of the prison of origin. Her Majesty's Representative in Saxony reported that there the prison work had been distributed into 35 trades, and that, in 1892, £27,500 had been paid in wages to prisoners. He added—

> "The entire system of prison labour is the object of chronic denunciation in the Saxon Legislature, in the Chambers of Commerce, in the Press, and otherwise, as, constituting an illegitimate interference with private industrial enterprise; and as a concession to free industry it has been laid down that no prison shall employ labour on commodities specially produced in its own immediate neighbourhood."

The prison-made goods, being unsaleable near the prisons, were despatched elsewhere. Whither? Would the President of the Board of Trade tell them? The present British Government alone welcomed them. The competition of British prison labour with free labour had been almost entirely stopped by the action of Trades Unions, although it undeniably taught the prisoners useful trades, was a social good, and reduced the cost of their maintenance. But if this competition were coming in on an extensive scale from Germany and Belgium, the injury to British free labour was infinitely greater. It was idle for the President of the Board of Trade to try and minimise the amount of the competition or to minimise the injury done. If he went to Glasgow, Edinburgh, or Aberdeen they would tell him that it was very real. Working men and manufacturers knew where the shoe pinched, and were entitled to relief from the Government. He had reason to believe that the great trade journal, *The Ironmonger,* estimated the importation of prison goods at £1,500 a week. It was idle for the right hon. Gentleman to aver that the injury in any particular trade was comparatively small. If there were any injury whatever to any trade it was the duty of the Government to endeavour to remove it, and most especially in this day of depression and distress. Lastly, it was idle for the right hon. Gentleman to pretend that the officers of Her Majesty's Customs were not able to tell what goods were prison-made or what were not. If he were not able, as well as the Secretary to the American Treasury, to prescribe regulations on the subject he must give place to some one who could. There was no difficulty whatever in the matter. On the ground, then, that 100,000 foreign prisoners were competing unfairly with British industry, and driving honest free men out of work—on the ground that it was the duty of the Government to move in this matter promptly and effectively—he begged to move the Resolution which stood in his name, and hoped the House would support it to a Division, quite irrespective of Party politics, which had nothing to do, as had this Motion, with the bread and butter of the people.

COLONEL F. BRIDGEMAN (Bolton), in seconding the Amendment, said he had had many communications from his constituents on this subject, which they regarded as a burning question. The House was anxious to hear the reply the President of the Board of Trade would make to what had been said by the hon. and gallant Gentleman who moved the Amendment, and although the right hon. Gentleman would probably not approve the presence of foreign-made goods in this country, yet he would no doubt fall back upon the artificial laws of Free Trade. Were they not putting themselves too much under the yoke of those artificial laws which prevented them doing the best for the people of their own country? A good many people posed as the advocates of Free Trade, but they struck at its fundamental principles. For instance, there were the supporters of the Eight Hours Bill, which was totally opposed to Free-trade principles, and many other cases of a similar nature could be mentioned. He submitted that there were many cases where it was better that the working classes of the country should have to pay fractionally more for certain goods, and at the same time to be fully employed, than to be displaced by foreign competitor for the privilege of securing cheaper goods. The working classes, however, were beginning to see that; and he hoped the Committee which had just been appointed to inquire into the question of the unemployed would turn its attention to the interesting facts and particulars that had been submitted by his hon. and gallant Friend.

MR. C. J. S. DODD (Essex, Maldon) thought that the hon. and gallant Member for Sheffield had been a little hard on the President of the Board of Trade in expecting the right hon. Gentleman to have the whole of the commerce of this country at his fingers' ends. That was too much to expect from any President of the Board of Trade, but they were entitled to say, on behalf of that Department, that it had inquired into, and had furished the Home Department with, some valuable information respecting this matter. In view of that information it would not be too much to expect the right hon. Gentleman to agree that it had become a duty to put a stop to the importation into this country of goods manufactured in Prussian prisons. As had been pointed out, foreign prisoners were let out for hire for small sums. They could make useful but common articles of almost all kinds, and their labour being so very cheap, the system had a disastrous effect upon the market. Prussia appeared from the Consular Reports to have a very large number of prisoners, something like 16,899, who were engaged in this work, a large portion of which no doubt came to our own markets. In the brush-making work some 862 prisoners were employed, and this state of things was not confined to Prussia, but was found also in Dresden, although the Saxony Legislature was reported to be continually denouncing the prison labour as interfering with outside trade. The rate paid for prison work greatly undercut the market rate, with the inevitable result of producing goods which the trade could not produce at the same price. It seemed to him that when they had Legislation, which was intended to promote the making of goods, it should be used to prevent prison-made articles coming into the country until they were honestly marked. He did not think that Englishmen would care to brush their hats and clothes with brushes with the prison stamp upon them, or to use any other article of the same origin. Although there were all sorts of men in the prisons, who did all sorts of work, yet none of them appeared to have anything to do with the law, and he attributed that to to the fact that lawyers were not in the habit of getting into gaol. He cordially joined, however, in asking the right hon. Gentleman to do something to put a stop to the present state of things as speedily as possible.

*Mr. W. C. QUILTER (Suffolk, Sudbury) desired to confine his remarks to those subjects about which his own constituents entertained rather deep feelings, and which affected them rather severely at the present time. In 1885, when he began to represent the Sudbury Division, the mat-weaving industry was in fairly satisfactory condition there. It had been taken up on the decline of the silk and woollen industry in that part of Suffolk, and was fairly prosperous. Just about that time, however, the people began to feel the pressure of the competition of prison labour, and, as many Members of the House would know, he had made many demands upon successive Home Secretaries in regard to this matter. Many of the holders of that Office had not met his representations unfavourably, and in 1891 the then Home Secretary said, in answer to a remonstrance against this prison competition, that the policy of the Prison Department would be to take care that no trade was seriously interfered with by prison labour. The intention then expressed was not carried out at once, but subsequently it was decided that this unfair competition with free labour should cease in England. That decision had been loyally carried out by the officials of the Department concerned, and he thanked them for the invariable courtesy and patience with which they had received his representations. But he was sorry to say that, although this kind of competition had been done away with in England, it still lingered in Scotland. There this iniquitous system was still allowed to prevail, but he trusted that its disappearance was only a matter of time. He could not believe that a Ministry like the present, who had such very good reasons for taking care of the working classes of this country, would permit a continuance of the system in any part of the country; but, turning to the question of foreign competition, he had to say that in the district which he represented the people had now to face competition with prison labour in Belgium. There were in Belgium so-called agricultural colonies. In 1888, at the instance of the Belgian Government, a working mat manufacturer went to Belgium in order to teach the mat-making industry to the prisoners in those colonies. Shortly afterwards, the right was given to a *concessionaire* to hire all the labour on those penal colonies. He was now paying a penny a day for the labour of these mat-makers, taught by an English manufacturer, and he had nothing to pay for fuel, light, and other necessaries. In 1890, when the manufacture of these mats began, the Belgian Labour Representatives in Parliament were in their places, and on the alert—the same could not be said, by the way, of the English Labour Representatives on that occasion—and they insisted that these mats should not be sold in Belgium itself, and so the mats came to this country of Free Trade and unrestricted competition. In 1890, the value of the mats so imported was about £20 a month, but in 1894 the figure had risen to £1,500 a month. Five hundred persons, at a place near Malines, were engaged in making these mats, the rate of payment being a penny a day. The mats could be sold in this country for 3s., yielding a profit of 50 per cent. to the importers. The same price would not cover the cost of mere labour in this country. These mats were purchased largely by the Co-operative Societies and for Asylums for the Blind, where they were exhibited as the work of the inmates. It was impossible for any district to contend against this prison competition. The case he had put before the House was surely serious enough to command the sympathetic attention of the President of the Board of Trade. But it was not only foreign competition and prison competition that threatened to strangle the industries of this country: there was the question of rates for carriage. The mats made in Belgium could be brought from Antwerp to London for very little more than the price that was charged for bringing mats from his constituency. He asked whether the time had not come when there should be some alteration in the law. Means ought to be devised to enable purchasers to ascertain whether the goods proffered to them had been manufactured by their own countrymen by free labour abroad or in foreign prisons. When in ignorance they bought goods manufactured in prisons abroad, they were unwittingly assisting the foreign prison-labour *concessionaire* to the detriment of starving fellow-countrymen.

Mr. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet) said, that the case put before the House by the hon. and gallant Member for Sheffield was undoubtedly a very strong one. Were the Chancellor of the Exchequer present he would no doubt tell the House that German prisons, in sending goods to this country, were conferring an inestimable boon upon us. In the right hon. Gentleman's view, a lowering of prices was always an advantage, and he would probably say that it was highly desirable that a man should not have to pay the full price of brushes made in this country, because the less he had to pay for such goods the more he would have to spend in other ways. But where was the line to be drawn? No doubt the President of the Board of Trade would say obligingly whether the interests of the home producer were always to be sacrificed to the interests of the foreigner; whether the interests of the native Briton were always to be sacrificed to those of the alien felon? The right hon. Gentleman would, he hoped, inform them whether competition of that kind was fair and reasonable to this country These were points with regard to which they had a right to ask and expect some guidance on the part of the Government. He hoped this issue would be clearly recognised by the Government. He hoped that the Government would not seek shelter under one of those endless inquiries which they already had *ad nauseam.* The facts were fully placed before the Government by the Official Reports of the representatives of Her Majesty abroad, and the Government would now be in a position to state whether they intended to stick to the principle of buying in the cheapest market under all conditions, or whether they thought that at last the line should be somewhere drawn.

*Mr. W. E. M. TOMLINSON (Preston) said, that, as representing a constituency which, to some extent, felt the grievance of this competition with foreign-made prison goods, he desired to add a word or two to what had been said by previous speakers.

Attention being called to the fact that 40 Members were not present, the House was counted, and, there being 40 Members present,

*Mr. TOMLINSON said, he understood that interest was taken in this subject by the constituents of the President of the Board of Trade, the right hon. Gentlemen himself, he was told, having presented a Petition from a portion of his constituents in support of this Motion. With reference to the observations of his hon. and learned Friend the Member for the Maldon Division he had to say that those who supported the Motion now before the House, did not agree with him that it would be sufficient if foreign prison-made goods were marked "prison-made," and allowed to be sold as before. There were two questions which affected their attitude in this matter. First of all, they observed that the sale of goods made in the prisons in this country was prohibited as being an unfair interference with free labour; and with regard to goods made in foreign prisons, they contended that they were not only objectionable on this ground, but that the conditions under which they were produced enabled them to be sold here at such a price as to put competition by free labour entirely out of the question. To stamp goods as prison-made would not have much effect, and would be wholly insufficient as a means of preventing their sale in this country. For instance the smoker of a good cigar would not care very much if it was wrapped round with a piece of paper intimating that it was prison-made. If a sufficient remedy for the grievance was to be found in marking the goods as prison-made, why was that remedy not adopted in the case of home-made prison goods? The question of price did not, in the case of the home-made goods, enter into the consideration, for it would have been perfectly easy to make such regulations that there need not be unfair competition between goods of that description and goods which were produced by free labour. But the labouring classes of this country were not satisfied to accept any such arrangement as that as a settlement of the question. They said it was not fair that honest labour should be displaced by the labour of prisons, and, therefore, they insisted on the system of complete prohibition, which was the law at the present time. What the supporters of this Motion desired was that the prohibition which existed as to the prison-made goods of this country should be extended, in some form or other, to the goods made in the prisons of foreign countries. If it was fair and right to prohibit altogether the manufacture and sale of goods made in prisons in this country, *a fortiori* it ought to be our object to prohibit the importation of goods made in foreign prisons which were sold at prices ruinous to honest trade. The Board of Trade have been supplied with all the necessary information, and the demand now made was that they should adopt in this country the same restrictions to the sale of prison-made goods which obtained in foreign countries.

MR. S. HOARE (Norwich) said, this subject was one of the deepest interest to the constituents of many hon. Members, and he thought those constituents would be somewhat surprised when they read the report of the proceedings to-night. They would be surprised that, on a subject that touched them so deeply, there should have been any attempt to "count out" the House. Members of the Opposition had endeavoured to show the Government what the distress all over the country was, and Her Majesty's Ministers, while they had professed sympathy with the sad circumstances under which the working population

were now labouring, had to-night shown that they cared nothing for this important question. Indeed, had it not been that a sufficient number of the Opposition were present when the "count" was moved, the discussion would have come to on untimely end. He had presented a Petition from persons engaged in the brush manufacturing business. If the Government could only understand how the trade of the poor men and women who signed that Petition was depressed, they would feel that this subject was worthy of the fullest consideration. The hon. and gallant Member for Sheffield called attention to the Resolution passed by the members of the Trades Union Congress which met in his (Mr. S. Hoare's) constituency in September last. The Resolution was condemnatory of the importation of goods made in foreign prisons, gaols, houses of correction, and penitentiaries, and the wonder was that no member of the Congress who happened to have a seat in the House of Commons had attended to-night to speak in its support. He hoped they would hear from the Government that they had more sympathy in this matter than up to the present they had shown. The evil of which complaint was now made was increasing year by year. There were poor people in many constituencies longing and ready to work but were cut out by the productions of foreign prisons. Surely they would, before the evening closed, receive some clear and distinct declaration from the Government that, whatever views might be held as to this or that form of relieving distress, they would prevent the continuance of the grievance to which his hon. and gallant Friend had called attention.

MR. G. WYNDHAM (Dover) said, that after a Debate lasting for two hours, it was not well they should be left in the dark as to whether Her Majesty's Ministers were in sympathy with the Motion. What was the nature of the Motion? Was it one of importance, but restricted to a small area? On the contrary, it touched materially a large number of the labouring population of the country, and sentimentally it affected every single artisan within the four seas. This Motion, which was moved without eliciting assent or dissent from the occupants of the Treasury

Bench, could not be put before a public meeting in any town in England without eliciting vociferous assent as soon as it was adumbrated. Up to now such interest as had been displayed in the House in the Motion had been displayed by the Conservative and Unionist Members. The majority of hon. Members would anticipate that on a question of this kind the Government would have replied, and of course would have replied favourably, about eight o'clock, after the matter had been put ably before the House, and they would naturally suppose they could then go away and dine with a clear conscience, having discharged their duty to their constituents. It was the astonishing silence on the Treasury Bench which had upset their calculations for their own domestic enjoyment and which had obliged them, at immense sacrifice to themselves, to remain at the House and maintain that a question of interest to every public meeting in England was not to be treated with indifference and contempt in the Parliament of this country.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. J. BRYCE, Aberdeen, S.) regretted that the hon. Member for Dover had not been able to get away to dinner, but there was a reason why he should put the hon. Gentleman to the sacrifice of remaining in the House. He had not intervened in the Debate before this in order that he might obtain a certain amount of light from the various hon. Members interested in the Question, light not only as to the amount of the evil which prevailed, but as to the extent to which the evil prevailed in any particular industry, and also as to the remedial steps which in the opinion of those hon. Members, might be taken. He owned in the fullest manner that it was very natural there should be complaint on this subject. It was only natural and reasonable that the working classes should feel aggrieved that their free labour was subjected to the competition of the labour of foreign convicts. He had never said anything which would indicate he was out of sympathy with that complaint, coming as it did from the working classes who thought themselves affected, and the complaint was, of course, all the more reasonable at such a time as the present, when many British industries were suffering serious depression. But he did not think it had been at all shown that the competition of foreign prison labour was the cause of the depression. Of course, when trades were suffering, it was only natural that persons engaged in those trades should look around, and should alight upon any cause for the depression that was at all probable; but he did not believe that many of the persons who signed the petitions on the subject which had been presented to the Government were, any more than the Government, in a position to show that this particular competition was one of the causes of the depression from which they suffered. He did not think it necessary to bring any doctrines of political economy into the matter as the hon. Member for the Isle of Thanet had invited him to do. He did not consider that the question of Free Trade arose in the matter at all. He attached more importance to the Reports obtained by Her Majesty's representatives abroad, which were contained in the Blue Book issued on the subject, and it was upon that evidence he proposed to deal with the matter. The hon. and gallant Member for Sheffield regretted that those Reports were not published sooner. But it would be seen that two of the Reports were dated August 12 and August 22, and it was the view of the Government that those Reports should be presented to the House all together, rather than one by one, as they were received by the Government. Well, he had gone through the Blue Book, and he could not find in the Reports from Germany any evidence whatever that any British industry suffered from prison labour. It did not appear that there was so large a manufacture of any particular article in prison as to make it probable that it interfered with the trade outside. In fact, they were told in the Blue Book that the policy of the German Government had been to spread prison labour over as many trades as possible, in order that it might have no injurious effect on any particular trade. There was a certain amount of popular feeling on the subject in Germany which found expression in agitation. The Government came to the conclusion that they ought not to throw the burden of prison competition on any particular trade; and, therefore, while they refused to abandon the system of prison labour, which was maintained in the interests of the prisoners themselves, they endeavoured to distribute the work over as many trades as possible, so that the production should not be so great in any particular trade as to affect that trade outside. The brush trade had been particularly referred to in the Debate. According to the Blue Book, no one appeared to be employed at brush-making in the prisons of Saxony; and the total number employed at the industry in all the prisons of Prussia was only 863.

*COLONEL H. VINCENT: I beg the right hon. Gentleman's pardon; but he will find that at cocoa-matting, &c., £1,010 was spent on prisoners employed in Saxony. The "&c." includes brush-making.

MR. BRYCE: But does it?

*COLONEL H. VINCENT: It is well known it does.

MR. BRYCE: I do not admit that brush-making is included in "cocoa-matting, &c." It covers a great deal besides brush-making. Therefore, I do not think there is anything to show that any prisoners in Saxony are employed in brush-making. Again, it should be remembered that the number of prisoners employed in a trade was not the same index as to the quantity of production as it would be in the case of free labour. Everyone knew that forced labour was proverbially unproductive. Moreover, prisoners were often committed only for a short term, and they were released before they had sufficiently learned a trade to make their labour productive. Many of them also were rogues and vagabonds, whom it was extremely difficult to train to efficiency. But the matter did not rest there. There was not a tittle of evidence that any of those prison-manufactured goods came into this country at all. He thought it very possible or probable that some did; but there was no evidence to show how many, and he did not think they were in the least justified in arguing from anything contained in the Blue Book, that anything like a considerable quantity of the goods was imported into England. He was confirmed in that opinion by the difficulty found by those interested in the matter in endeavouring to prove that those prison-made goods competed with English industries. Some time ago, representatives of those industries came to the Office of the Board of Trade as a Deputation, and they were asked to furnish to the Board some *data* as to the quantity of those goods that were imported. But they were unable to furnish those *data*; and the Board of Trade, likewise, had no evidence whatever, though he had caused very careful inquiries to be made in the matter. They had, therefore, two facts clearly before them—first, that the total production of Foreign prison-made goods was small; and, secondly, that there was no evidence of any kind as to the proportion of that small production which found its way into English markets. There was, undoubtedly, considerable depression in the brush trade. One branch of it had largely passed out of the hands of men into the hands of women, who took lower wages than the men, and that was one of perhaps many causes that had limited the employment for men in that particular trade. There were many trades, as the House knew, that were not alleged to have suffered from foreign prison-competition, but which had, undoubtedly, suffered from general foreign competition. Hon. Members opposite had got a remedy for that competition, but it was a remedy which the House would not adopt. But with regard to the question of the effect of foreign prison labour on British industries, the Debate had not carried them any further than the Blue Book. They were entirely in the dark on that subject; and it was not a little significant that, notwithstanding the amount of time the question had been on the carpet, and the amount of consideration given to it, no light whatever had been thrown upon it. But, assuming that there was such an importation of foreign prison-made goods which entered into competition with British industries, what could be done to stop it? That was really a very difficult question. He could understand people saying:

> "It may be that it has not been proved that any serious injury is done to any particular trade; but nevertheless, if the thing is wrong in principle, if foreign goods made in foreign prisons ought not to compete with British goods made by free labour, stop it."

He did not quarrel with that position. Unfortunately, no one could devise a means for distinguishing prison-made goods from others. [An hon. MEMBER: "The Americans."] The hon. Member for Sheffield in his Bill last year did not attempt it. From him, if from any one, might have been expected some practical light on the question—some indication of how the distinction between prison-made and other goods could be drawn, and of what kind of regulations should be adopted to prevent the importation of prison-made goods. But he looked in the hon. Member's Bill in vain for such guidance.

*COLONEL H. VINCENT: Distinguish by regulations.

MR. J. BRYCE: What regulations?

*COLONEL H. VINCENT: Regulations made by the Board of Trade.

MR. J. BRYCE said that he should like to hear what regulations would enable a Customs Officer, when he saw a brush, to say—"This brush was made in a foreign prison." He should only be too glad if the hon. Member, or anyone else, would show a Customs Officer how to distinguish such a brush from one made in England. It was not enough to know that it was foreign; the Officer must know that it was made in a foreign prison. He would not say that the task was impossible, because the ingenuity of hon. Members might be greater than that of the Customs; but no one had yet pointed out the way in which the difficulty could be overcome. The hon. Member for Sheffield referred to a United States statute on the subject. That was a statute prohibiting the importation of goods made by prison-labour, and authorising the Secretary of the Treasury to prescribe such regulations as might be necessary for the enforcement of the statute. He had taken steps to ascertain what regulations the Secretary of the Treasury had made, and he was informed that he had made none. The same difficulty, no doubt, presented itself to him.

*COLONEL H. VINCENT: Will a Dispatch upon that subject be laid upon the Table, saying that the regulations have been made by the Secretary of the American Treasury?

MR. J. BRYCE said that he must find out first how the information came to him. He believed that it was in a Dispatch, but he had also written to the United States for confirmation of the information. It was all very well to say that what Congress had done we could do. But there were many things which Congress had done and which he hoped we should never do. One of the things Congress was most fond of doing was passing statutes which it knew could have no possible effect. It contained a great many Members who, like the hon. Member for Sheffield, were extremely anxious to take up any grievance which excited public attention. But they found it easier to discover a grievance than to discover a remedy. He was quite ready to consider the whole question with a perfectly open mind, and he hoped that he had not argued the case with any preconceived views. Of course, the hon. Member would probably like to mark all foreign goods as foreign goods. But that was not the policy which the House had adopted, or which the Committee who recommended the Merchandise Marks Act, adopted. Indeed, they expressly refused it. Therefore, that was not the question, but merely the making of prison-made goods. Of course, one thing could be done. In any trade particularly threatened the manufacturers might mark their goods "home made," and then those who desired to promote home industries could prefer their goods. The Merchandise Marks Act would then apply to imported goods which were so marked. He was perfectly willing to consider any suggestion on this subject. When there existed among our industrial classes a feeling that they were exposed to unfair competition, and that this might be one of the causes of the depression from which their trades had suffered, there ought to be some effort made to discover what the evil was, and whether it would admit of a remedy. The hon. Member in his Motion suggested that some steps should be taken; he must admit that he did not know what steps to take. He had not been able to discover how great was the evil or what remedy could be applied. The best suggestion he could make was that the wisdom of the House of Commons should be elicited on the subject by means of a Committee. At the same time, he should be glad if any hon. Member would himself bring in a Bill to relieve the difficulty. The Government were willing to take any steps to have this matter and the possible remedies thoroughly sifted and examined.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I confess that I have with some reluctance stayed in the House during the discussion on this question, because I thought it was a matter upon which opinion was so universally agreed, that discussion would end in a concession on the part of the Government. But although I was reluctant to stay, I admit that I have been amply rewarded by the interesting and instructive speech to which we have just listened from the President of the Department, who is appointed and paid to look after the interests of trade, who says that he must beg from the Opposition a policy. But before I deal with that speech, I will say a word or two as to the question before us. On the merits there is absolutely no contention. The right hon. Gentleman has flung to the winds all the political economy of his chief, the Leader of the House. He says he does not come to the consideration of this question biassed in any way by those eternal principles which were laid down the other night by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and which teach us that the lower the price of commodities the better it is for the nation. He has flung aside those proposals as though they were the proposals of belated philosophers; and he has granted the whole contention of my hon. Friend who introduced the subject. But as to the political importance of the subject. Hitherto it has not been a political question. From to-night it will be. I say that there is no question upon which the working classes of this country have more generally made up their mind than upon this. I do not believe that there is any single hon. Member who sits for an industrial constituency, or who has village industries in an agricultural constituency, who could hold an open meeting and carry a resolution against the principle for which my hon. Friend contends. I believe that is admitted on all sides. The other night we were discussing a question of no doubt great Imperial and national importance; but I am afraid I must confess that the working classes of this country care more for this question of the admission of prison-made goods into this country, in competition with their own industries, than they do for those great Imperial questions which have been the subject of absolute contest between the two Parties. This is a question, therefore, of supreme political importance. I am not exaggerating its real economic importance, but its political importance cannot be denied. I am afraid it would be out of order to "Kodak" the House of Commons at any time; but I wish we could have a photograph of the House of Commons during this discussion and send it by the million throughout the constituences that they might have seen the interest which some of the people's Representatives take in questions on which they speak very loudly on platforms. Allusion has already been made to the fact that the Labour Members have been conspicuous by their absence. Were they absent on the Votes of Want of Confidence, three or four of which have taken place in the last fortnight? No; every single Member was present. But on an occasion which specially concerns the interests of the working classes, and with regard to a subject on which those who are invariably put forward as the only legitimate Representatives of the working classes, have spoken with a unanimous voice, they are conspicuous by their absence. Only four of them have put in an appearance during any time of the Debate, and during the greater part of the Debate not a single one of them has been present. I say we take note of these things, and we give you warning that we take note of them.

MR. J. WILSON (Durham): I should like to remind the right hon. Gentleman that I have been present the whole time.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: Then my hon. Friend has been a conspicuous exception to conspicuous absentees. It is true, however, because I have watched the debate, and I know exactly who has been present and who has not. I except, of course, my hon. Friend on the Treasury Bench (Mr. Burt); but I regard him at the present moment as an official member of the Government, and not an especial representative of the Labour classes. But is it not a most extraordinary fact that those hon. Members who claim to represent the working classes should be present at a Party vote and should not be present on an occasion when a question not necessarily Party in complexion was being discussed and when their interests were under discussion? Now, I ask, what is the position of the Government with regard to this important question, as to which I have said that I do not believe there is a single Member on either side of the House who can entertain a doubt as to the opinions of his constituency on the subject! The first thing I have to say about the Government is, that they assisted an attempted "count." I charge against the Government, who by the necessities of their situation are bound to be present in the House on an occasion like this, that when a "count" was called on an essentially Labour question, there were only two Members of the Government present on the Front Bench. If it had not been for the Opposition there would have been no House to discuss this matter, and the Government would have avoided what is, no doubt, an extremely awkward question for them. But we have waited, and at last we have obtained a very official reply; it was a model of an official reply. I do not blame the President of the Board of Trade; he is merely the tube for conveying this information to the House. It is not a matter in which the right hon. Gentleman has taken any interest himself; it is merely one upon which he has officially informed himself; and he has accepted the information handed to him by gentlemen who naturally do not care to have further important and delicate duties imposed upon them; and he has given all this information to the House as the official reply of the Government. No one wonders that the officers of the Board of Trade should desire to have all the difficulties of the question pointed out; but I think it is the business of the head of the Board of Trade and the Representative of the Government, when face to face with what is practically a national and almost unanimous demand, to find some means of satisfying it. What has the right hon. Gentleman done? The country, I hope, will take notice of his reply. First of all, the right hon. Gentleman seeks to mimimise the facts, to declare that the whole business is of no importance, to say that, after all, we are making a great fuss about nothing and that it is not necessary to do anything. In the second place, he says that the Government are going to do as little as possible. Take the first point, that this is an unimportant matter. The case has been given up on its merits by the right hon. Gentleman. He does not pretend to defend so ridiculous and so abnormal a system as that which prevents us from employing our prisoners in useful and valuable labour—a matter which might be justified on many important social and political grounds—but which allows the Germans to employ their prisoners, not at the expense of their workpeople, but to take good care that the goods made by their prisoners should be specially ear-marked for British consumption. I will do my right hon. Friend the justice to say that he did not defend such an absurdity as that; but he says:—

> "Granted that it is very improper the system should go on, it is only a little one; it is so small that you need not take any notice of it; I do not believe as yet that any British industry has been ruined."

What a satisfaction to British industry, in process of being ruined, to know that the President of the Board of Trade is fairly confident from statistics supplied to him by German sources—statistics "made in Germany"—that up to the present time no important British industry has been ruined! I do know that he can even take that satisfaction to himself. Suppose I accepted every one of his figures—and I do not accept any one of them—that only 863 alien felons are employed in making brushes sent into England, does anyone suppose that the introduction of goods by 863 persons in a limited trade like the brush trade has not an enormous effect? I suppose that the House understands what is the cause of high and low prices—high prices to-day and low prices to-morrow? It is the introduction in a trade already fully supplied of a fractional increase. I do not care how fractional it is. Suppose that you are making 100 brushes; if you increase the output to 101 brushes you reduce the price of the brushes not by 1 per cent., but by 50 per cent. Everyone will be trying to sell the additional brush, and the result is the enormous reduction which we see. If anyone doubts that for a moment let him look at the state of the greatest of our industries. What is the reason for the reduction in the price of corn? Do you not suppose that the reduction in the price of wheat has been enormous? I believe, as a matter of fact, that in the last year the total production of wheat in the world actually decreased; but in any case the increased production of wheat in the world during ten years has been only a fraction of the total production, and yet that has been sufficient to send down wheat to 20s. a quarter. What happens here happens *a fortiori* in those small trades concerned. In the brush trade no one has been able to make a profit; the workmen are not able to get decent wages; and this system of competition has ruined everything in the trade worth fighting for. The right hon. Gentleman has dealt with the question as if it was only a question affecting the brush trade. English prison work, as we know, is confined to two or three trades; but the Germans have actually sent over to this country for models of English manufacfactures, and they are making them in their prisons. At the present time they are making about 20 different articles in various branches of industry; so that, after they have contrived to ruin the brush trade, they will go into many other trades; and, meanwhile, the President of the Board of Trade will continue to be distinguished by the cheerful optimism he has displayed to-night. The right hon. Gentleman made an admission. He said that the Germans had spread these prison industries over as many manufactures as possible. What a satisfactory state of things! How admirable it will read in the newspapers to-morrow! The right hon. Gentleman will be enabled to go to Aberdeen and say to his fellow-citizens there—

> "At the present time the Germans in their prisons have not dealt with the jute manufactures,"

but a member of the audience will say—

> "Oh, but you say that the Germans have spread their prison work over as many industries as possible, and how do you know that the German prison system may not spread even to our industry?"

The fact is that there is no industry which is safe as long as this state of things is allowed to continue. The gravity of the case has been admitted by the Government, though, at the same time they have sought to minimise it; the moral right of the demand made has been admitted by the Government, although the actual amount of the injury done has been minimised. In presence of the universal demand from the constituencies, and an admission by the official head of the Department, we are asked to take a Committee. No, Sir; in that respect we are not the comrades of the hon. Member for West Ham. The right hon. Gentleman said that while he did not wish to ignore altogether this public feeling and the necessity for doing something, he modestly confessed that he could not do anything. He actually made it a complaint against Members of the Opposition that they had not found a policy for him. He is a Member of a Government that has forgotten how to govern and that has not learnt how to resign. Let the right hon. Gentleman resign; we will find him a policy. But we are not going to lend him our prescriptions while he takes the fees. What is he on the Front Bench for? What has the right hon. Gentleman been appointed President of the Board of Trade for if not to find a policy? But now he actually comes and sues the Opposition to find a policy for him which he cannot find. I do not think there would be much difficulty in finding him a policy, but, as I have said, I do not see why we should prescribe until we are called in. If we decline to find him a policy which he cannot find for himself, the right hon. Gentleman actually says to the House that he has an open mind, and that his open mind will take a Committee. Whatever the House does, I hope it will not take a Committee. We know perfectly well what that means. I think an hon. Member belonging to the Ministerial side said the other day, with reference to the Committee promised to the hon. Member for West Ham, that, so far as a Royal Commission was concerned, that was acknowledged on all sides to be a means of securing delay and in putting off a question; but as regards a Committee, he thought that something might be quickly expected from it. One experiment with a Committee is enough; and I shall believe in the result of the Committee of the hon. Member for West Ham when I see it. That Committee is dealing with a subject which involves the interests of hundreds of thousands of people; it is urgent in a sense which no other question before the House is; it has, therefore, a better chance than any other Committee could have of coming to a useful conclusion. But the question now before us is a question the dealing with which has been already postponed owing to the action of successive Presidents of the Board of Trade during the last three years. If it were submitted to a Committee of this House we know that that Committee would not sit *de die in diem*, it would not make any interim reports, and it might report at the end of the Session, when the Government would find it impossible, even if they were willing, to find time to carry any effective legislation. This is a matter for the Government to take into their own hands. It is no new matter; it has been brought before the House again and again, by resolutions passed by their own supporters, by resolutions passed by individual Trade Unions as well as by the Congress at Norwich. It is not dignified, right, or proper that the Government should sit there and say they have no remedy. If that is their position they should make way for persons who can find a remedy. The proposal of the Government has shown to the House what we have contended, that, however great the interest they may take in those large constitutional questions involving the destruction of the Empire or the destruction of a trade, they have no interest whatever in those social questions which have the greatest interest for the vast majority of the people.

Mr. J. MORLEY: My right hon. Friend has enlivened an hour which is not usually distinguished by animation. He charges us with indifference to Labour questions because some of us were absent during the speech of the hon. Member for Sheffield; but while my right hon. Friend was speaking I looked at the front Opposition Bench, where sat two gentlemen, though now there are three. One of them is a predecessor of mine in the office I now hold (Mr. J. Lowther), who advocates doctrines which I am sure my right hon. Friend would be the first person to repudiate. But where is the former President of the Board of Trade, the right hon. Baronet the Member for Bristol (Sir M. Hicks-Beach)? The right hon. Member for West Birmingham fell foul of the President of the Board of Trade for not submitting some proposal of his own instead of suggesting a Select Committee. But I remember that, six years ago, when I stood, and was proud to stand, by the side of my right hon. Friend at this table, he brought forward a humane and beneficent scheme relating to merchant shipping, and, finding he could not have his own way, what did he do? He referred the whole of that large and momentous question, not to a Select Committee, but to a Royal Commission.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: The parallel is not quite accurate. At that time I had my remedy, which I submitted to the House, and it was only in consequence of the lack of time that I did not carry it to a final conclusion. Finding it was impossible to obtain sufficient time, I accepted a Commission as the only alternative.

Mr. J. MORLEY: I am not in the least finding fault with my right hon. Friend; I only cite what happened there when he was President of the Board of Trade.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: And nothing has been done since.

Mr. J. MORLEY: I do not want to labour the point, but my right hon. Friend seems to suppose that there is some fundamental antagonism between the free trade position taken up by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the views of the President of the Board of Trade with respect to the Motion of the hon. Member for Sheffield. Now, if there is an ardent free trader in the House, it is the humble individual who is addressing it; but can I for one moment think I am bound, in the interests of free trade, or in order to be a consistent free trader, to admit into the markets of this country convict-made goods made in this country or convict goods made elsewhere? That is not free trade. Would the late Mr. Bright have allowed the products of slave industry to come into competition with the products of free industry? ["He did."] But the moment it came to be a question of slavery his free trade theory vanished. ["Never" and "Sugar."] At all events, there is no inconsistency between the most orthodox doctrine of free trade and the refusal to allow goods manufactured in prisons, by men who are not self-supporting but who are supported by taxpayers, to come into competition with the products of free industry. My right hon. Friend will admit there is no inconsistency in extreme free traders insisting that prison-made goods shall not come into competition with free labour.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: Let me say I entirely concur in what my right hon. Friend has said. So far as he and his friends are professed free traders, I do not find any inconsistency in their present position; but there is inconsistency between the statement of the President of the Board of Trade and the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the cheaper goods were the better it was for this country.

Mr. J. MORLEY: I suppose that as an abstract proposition thrown upon the floor of the House that is absolutely undeniable. In my own constituency I have often been challenged on this question; and I have never said that upon economic grounds, and with the strictest regard to economic principles, allow prison-made goods to come into competition with the products of free labour. I will go a step further. If I would not allow the products of prison industry in our own country to come into competition with free labour, still less should I be able to sacrifice that sensible maximum in deference to the convenience of any other country. The issue now is, What is practicable? If either my right hon. Friend or the Member for Sheffield will show me an expedient or device, a method or a system by which I can always identify a convict-made brush or mat, I certainly would do the best I could to carry it out. [Colonel Howard Vincent: It is quite easy.] Then let the hon. Member go before a Committee and show them that it is easy. It is all very well, but what is the device or scheme which you say is so easy? My right hon. Friend challenged you to produce it, and it has never been produced in any form or way. The right hon. Member for West Birmingham says that no industry is safe, and he says that English models are sent for to be copied in Germany; but there is no evidence of that before us, or that German prison-made goods are embarked for British consumption. I defy my right hon. Friend to prove that one of these brushes comes to England. [Colonel Howard Vincent *produced a brush, and held it up amid great laughter.*] Yes, that is a brush; but what is the history of it? Where did he get it? If he will go before a Committee he can be examined as to the identity of that particular brush. I represent an industrial constituency in which no cheerful view is taken of present prospects, but I know that there are great economic causes at work; there are great economical forces at work which we may or may not be able to resist by Legislation. But do not let a man come down to this House and say that the safety of British industry depends in any degree whatever on the importation of a few articles made in German prisons. If it can be shown that there are practical methods of keeping these articles out of the country, I, for one, would fall in with any such methods as have been suggested, if it can be shown that the evils which may accrue would not be greater than the evils which it is sought to remedy. I cannot go further in that direction than the President of the Board of Trade, and if the Mover of the Resolution and those who support him are sincere in their desire to attain the object they have in view they will accept the proposal of the Government.

Mr. C. B. STUART-WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam) said, those who remembered the previous answers of the President of the Board of Trade to previous questions on the subject, and who were witnesses of the hurried consultation of what appeared to be a Committee of the Cabinet on the Treasury Bench, shortly after the "count out" was unsuccessfully moved, would not be surprised at the markedly improved tone of the right hon. Gentleman towards the Motion of his hon. Friend; and that improvement had been carried a great deal further by the Chief Secretary for Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman had spoken of the practicability of attaining the object of the Resolution; but the last Administration, while they held power, reduced practically to vanishing point the manufacture of articles competing with British industries in British prisons. Permission was also refused to the officer of a foreign Government to study in our prisons the manufacture of articles which it was desired to produce in foreign prisons. With regard to the argument of impracticability, the late Government passed the Merchandise Marks Act, under which the importation of certain goods into this country was prohibited. Could Custom House Officials without the help of Regulations distinguish these from goods not the subject of prohibition? Could Custom House Officials detect goods falsely marked as to mode of manufacture and the materials of which they were composed? He believed the prohibitions of that Act were operative and effectual, and he believed that if a similar statute were passed prohibiting the importation of prison-made foreign goods it would be found that the capital embarked in the trades would be too timid to risk the possibilities of detection. If the British importer were not ready to import, what would become of the trade of the foreign exporte? The fundamental principle was—Why should we give in this country greater assistance to the penal system of foreign countries than we gave to our own at home? A Committee was offered, but the offer was not accepted by any considerable portion of the House. Why was not a Committee valuable or useful for the purpose? There was only one source to go to for evidence. Let them ask Custom House Officials whether they could distinguish goods in the way he had mentioned. They would tell them they could not: and having asked that question and received that answer they would do the only advantageous work open to any Committee. The answer to the offer of a Committee was that the matter was too small for a Committee, and too small for the Government to have made this ridiculous fuss about it.

*SIR A. K. ROLLIT (Islington S.) said, the one redeeming feature of the Debate had been the late but very acceptable disavowal by the Chief Secretary for Ireland of doctrines of *laissez faire* which apparently had previously been silently acquiesced in, but which were a great injustice to our workpeople and to the trades of the country. The question was whether the Government had done all that they could to protect our trade interests against these practices, which were not based on principles of free trade at all. He ventured to say that the Government had not done what they might have done to put an end to such a system. The President of the Board of Trade had even made a reflection upon the United States for having done at least their best to prevent the introduction of such goods into their country; but, at any rate, the Customs Officers of the United States were at the present time in a very different position to the Customs Officers of our own country. Any attempt upon the part of our own Officers to stop or even to investigate the origin of these goods would be an illegality. This was not a question for a private Member's Bill, but for the Government, since the abuse struck vitally at all classes of industry in the country, and was one of the causes of the present distress. If it was admitted that a measure of reform would be welcome, why did not the Government initiate proceedings for a Bill which would give powers which were at present wholly wanting? The old doctrine of *laissez faire* was persistent in certain quarters, but they hoped that the present Debate would do much to demolish it. He could see no great objection to a Committee, though he doubted if it would do any good, but what they desired was some action on the part of the Government.

*MR. W. R. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston) said, that the constituency which he represented was almost the centre of the brushmaking industry, and he had therefore, from time to time, had a great deal of evidence brought before him as to the importation of foreign articles into this country. There might not be any direct or positive evidence of the importation of prison-made brushes, but he had been told on good authority that a well-known firm in the West End of London, which had four large establishments in which brushes were sold, had no factory in this country for the manufacture of these brushes, and it was fair to conclude that their brushes were manufactured abroad, and largely by prison labour. What the workmen desired was that all articles which came into this country should bear the brand of the firm which manufactured them, and if they were made in German prisons it should be clearly stated upon the articles themselves. He could state on excellent authority, in order to show how the law was dodged, that at the present time large cases of merchandise were imported into the country with an outside label signifying that they came from Germany, but not one of the articles of which they were full bore the label, and some English firms were dishonest enough to afterwards brand them with their own names, and sell them as English-made goods at prices much above their value. That was what the English workmen complained of. The great majority of them were Free Traders, but they contended that the public ought to have the means of knowing the character of the goods they bought and where they came from, and that British traders should not be permitted to sell German prison-made articles as of their own manufacture. He knew well that it was the method of Governments to propose, or grant, an inquiry when they were in a difficulty about a question. The practice was not confined to one Party. The proposal to-night was by no means a new one, and probably it would be again resorted to by hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite when they again occupied the Treasury Bench, to which they were now looking with a longing eye. But there could be no doubt that more information was wanted on the question; and he therefore thought it very desirable that a Committee of Inquiry should be appointed. He therefore, rejoiced that the Government had decided upon this course, although not until the last moment, but whether the Committee was granted at the first hour or the eleventh hour he was glad to accept the offer they had made. He hoped, however, that the scope of the Inquiry would not be limited to prison-made goods, but would be extended to other goods imported into this country, and to the comparative failure of the Merchandise Marks Act.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) desired to point out that the policy of the Government on this question was of a twofold character. The first part of the policy of the Government was to procure a "count out" of the House. He would describe what took place. An Irish Member suddenly appeared in the House and drew the attention of the Deputy Speaker to the fact that 40 Members were not present, and then, silently folding his tent like the Arab, quietly slid away. The bells rang for a count, and how many Members of the Government came in to prevent a count? There were about 25 paid officials Members of the Government in that House, and two of them only came in to respond to the summons. How many unofficial Members of the Party appeared? Why, some of them who were in the House at once cleared out, and but for Members of the Opposition the intention of the Government would have succeeded, the House been counted out, and the question burked. He wished the constituencies to know that this was the primary policy of the Ministry on this subject. After the count was prevented, what took place? The hon. Member for Merionethshire (Mr. T. E. Ellis), came up the Floor of the House and took a seat on the Treasury Bench. Immediately hurried consultation took place between Ministers, and then the President of the Board of Trade rose and made a long speech, and finally threw the offer of a Committee at the hon. and gallant Member for Sheffield Central. The right hon. Gentleman confessed that he had no policy of his own, and asked the hon. Member what he had to propose. In a day or two the Welsh question would be brought before them; a day or two later the Irish Land question would be introduced, and a few days after that the House would be deep in the discussion of the Local Veto proposal. Now, he put it to the House, even supposing the proposed Committee sat and prepared and brought up its Report, what chance was there that in such a crowded Session as this was certain to be, any of its recommendations would be considered and carried into law? The first plan having failed, the Government tried this second plan of appointing a Committee, whose Report, even if arrived at, could not be acted upon this Session. The constituencies would know the facts to-morrow, and the people would have no difficulty in understanding the primary policy of the Government on this interesting and important question.

MR. J. PINKERTON (Galway) said, he represented a constituency in which there were a large number of brushmakers, and on that account he was disposed at first to support the proposal of the hon. and gallant Member for Sheffield. But when the right hon. Member for West Birmingham stated that instead of being a social question, this was a political question, he had to reconsider his position. He was anxious to benefit the brushmakers of Galway, and he thought he could best serve their interests by supporting the Government who had the interest of the working men at heart. He believed it was not by any measure introduced by the hon. Member for Sheffield that they could benefit the working men in this matter, but by investigating the matter by means of a Select Committee; and instead of trying to make policital capital out of this subject, he thought every honest friend of Labour must vote for the Government, and by that means, show that they were not political quacks and humbugs.

MR. P. A. MUNTZ (Warwickshire, Tamworth) said, that having heard the remarks of the hon. Member for Haggerston and of the hon. Member for Galway, he could not help feeling that they would get into some little trouble with their brushmaking constituents. The question now stood in a totally different position from that which it occupied at the begining of the evening. He was anxious that the working classes should have their special attention drawn to the course that was pursued. A "count" was attempted in the most marked manner, upon a non-political subject. It was, he thought, very discreditable, in the present condition of trade and industry that the Government should have attempted a "count" on a matter of this importance. The attempt failed in the most signal manner, and they had a Debate which ended in the rising of the President of the Board of Trade. The right hon. Gentleman gave the case away as regards Free Trade—"foul trade" would be a more accurate expression; he said, firstly, that the manufacture was of no importance; and, secondly, that there was no proof that foreign prison-made goods were introduced into this country. But the hon. Member for Haggerston told the House that he had the most conclusive proof on the subject—["No No!"]; at any rate, he gave presumptive evidence. This trade was undoubtedly doing serious injury to the manufacturing industry of this country at a time when the manufacturing population in every branch of industry was suffering in the most lamentable manner, when starvation reigned around, and when there was nothing but the efforts of the charitable to maintain many thousands of the poor in every great centre in the country. Was that a time when Members should try to shuffle out of a question of this kind? The people in the great centres would form their own conclusions, as to which Party in the House was endeavouring to serve their interests, and which Party had signally failed in their duty. All the questions in which the Government appeared to take an interest, might be trotted out, but the question in which the great mass of the people took an interest at the present time was, how they should get their living.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Belfast, W.) thought it a somewhat unusual proceeding that a second Minister should be put up to enforce the case for the Government. But he did not wonder at it, for a precious mess the President of the Board of Trade made of the case. As far as they could judge, the right hon. Gentleman made common cause with the "alien felon," and it appears to have been thought that the partisanship should be repudiated by the Government. Therefore an absolutely different case was stated by the Chief

Secretary. It was admitted by the Government that there was a great grievance existing, and it was proved that the offence against our commercial interest was a deliberate one. The evidence was absolutely clear on that head, that this operation of the German Prison Authorities was intended to operate to the detriment of foreign countries. It was clear that the grievance existed, and that the offence was a deliberate one. It had also been proved that there was no other possible avenue through which these goods could escape except the British Market. On that they had the concurrent testimony of the hon. Member for Haggerston that, to the best of his belief, these goods had come into the country. It was sought to minimise the difficulty by saying that it affected only a small industry; but that did not take away in any possible degree from the danger of allowing this principle to be admitted. The Resolution referred to no question of Free Trade or Protection. It referred to something quite outside any matter of Free Trade. He could not recollect any expression of any views by the late Mr. John Bright with regard to the exclusion of American goods produced by slaves; but this had nothing whatever to do with the question of Free Trade. The Resolution said—

> "That it is incumbent upon Her Majesty's Government, in the interests of the industrial classes of the United Kingdom, at once to take steps to restrict the importation of goods made in foreign prisons by the forced labour of convicts and felons."

There was not a single Member in the House who would dare to go down to his constituents and contest any single syllable of that proposition; and yet they had it from the Government, although they admitted that the danger existed, that they proposed to do absolutely nothing to remedy the evil. They could not be put off by the statement that there was no practical remedy. He should say that there were many, for there were now classes of goods prohibited from entering into this country except in strict regulations, as, for instance, copyright books; and it certainly ought not to pass the ingenuity of the Board of Trade, if they were seriously in earnest, to find some method of remedying the evil.

Mr. J. CUMMING MACDONA (Southwark, Rotherhithe) said, he rose to enter his protest against the action of the Government. Whilst thousands of our people in London were out of work—he went through his constituency the other day, and everywhere the cry was "Out of work! Out of work!"—was it right to encourage the importation of foreign prison-made goods to compete with the goods, produced by the honest toil of our fellow-citizens?

Mr. J. POWELL-WILLIAMS (Birmingham, S.) said, that last night the Government moved the closure on a very important Labour question. That night they had adopted a different policy with a similar view. They had endeavoured to have a "count" on another Labour question, in which workmen all through the country were deeply interested, and he trusted that the Labour Members might be induced to take some notice of the matter, and to adjust their support of the Government according to the treatment the Government gave to these Labour questions. This was not altogether a question which related to the brush industry alone. Many other industries were deeply touched by the system. Something had been said about the lack of evidence of the evil. If the Government would make inquiries of their own representative on the *Labour Gazette* in Birmingham, they would learn from him that this importation of German goods affected several trades there. It did not quite do, perhaps, to judge of evidence from the number of telegrams a Member of the House might have sent to him on a particular question. He had himself before now had to wade through telegrams to the House, and he had that day received no less than 11 telegrams from manufacturers in Birmingham expressing their hope that he would be able to support the action of the hon. Member for Sheffield that night. One of those manufacturers told him the other day that such was the competition in a particular branch of the trade he carried on that he was absolutely driven out of it, and was compelled to dismiss the workmen employed in it. He also told him that he had absolutely followed the course of the goods formerly manufactured by him from Germany. This was a matter which the Government ought to deal with resolutely and quickly; and when he said resolutely and quickly he did not mean by a Select Committee. He had been long enough in the House to know what that sort of thing led to, and was reminded that only a few nights ago, the *Westminster Gazette*, an organ which supported the Government, said that no doubt the Select Committee which had been appointed to consider the question of distress would report upon the matter as soon as the frost had gone and when no distress existed. The same thing, no doubt, would happen in this case, and he hoped his hon. and gallant Friend would absolutely decline to accept the suggestion which had been made by the Government; and he hoped, further, that, if the Government persisted in carrying their suggestion out that every Member of the Unionist Party would abstain from sitting on the Committee, as their labour would only result in a farce.

*MR. J. KEIR HARDIE (West Ham, S.) said he intended to support the Amendment, and the declarations he had heard from the Treasury Bench had confirmed him in that determination. The hon. Member for Haggerston assumed that the Committee was to be appointed to inquire into the question of prison-made goods. But that was not the contention of the President of the Board of Trade. His words were—

> "Show me a method by which I can identify prison-made goods, and I will adopt it."

The Committee was to be appointed for the purpose of finding out that method.

*MR. CREMER: I am sure the hon. Member would not willingly misrepresent me. What I said was that I hoped the scope of the inquiry would be considerably extended beyond the terms referred to by the President of the Board of Trade.

*MR. J. KEIR HARDIE: Quite so. And I am certain the Government will be only too willing to adopt the suggestion.

MR. BRYCE: I may save the hon. Member some trouble if I tell him that I do not limit the Committee to that particular point. I said nothing of the kind.

*MR. J. KEIR HARDIE said, he had noted the words, and thought they would be verified by other hon. Members or by the reports of the Debates in the morning. The Chief Secretary and one or two others had gone into heroics about their professions of Free Trade, but they could not shut their eyes to the fact that Free Trade in the abstract was all but an impossibility. No one who supported Trade Unionism could claim to be a consistent Free Trader. Free Trade was a good thing as long as there were equal conditions; but the Trade Unionists of this country had no intention of allowing the sweater or the under paid labourer of continental nations to enter into competition with them. There should be no mistake upon that point; and the present question was the thin end of the wedge to secure that object. Marking the imported articles with the name of the manufacturer had been suggested, and surely that method would succeed in preventing them coming into the country without their origin being known, unless, of course, there was dishonesty on the part of our officials. As there had been such unanimity on this question, he suggested that the best thing the Government could do would be to introduce a short, non-contentious Bill to settle the matter—such a one as would easily pass through the House, and put a stop to the importation of these prison-made goods, which were believed to be doing a certain amount of injury to British industries. For these reasons he intended to support the Amendment of the hon. and gallant Member for Sheffield.

MR. A. CROSS (Glasgow, Camlachie) said his constituents were deeply interested in this subject; but was he to have to tell them that the Government, who for the time being were in charge of the trade and industries of the country, were practically turning a deaf ear to the entreaties that were being made? The Government had used their power to prevent the Debate coming to a conclusion, and certainly had not met this matter in the spirit which hon. Members representing industrial centres had a right to expect. He hoped the Labour Members would take full note of the stand which the Government had assumed in relation to this pressing question. The real question before them was, whether they should restrict the importation of goods which it was admitted ought not to be imported. They had the example of the American Government to guide them, for that Government prohibited the importation of goods of this description. Let the President of the Board of Trade consent to introduce a measure of prohibition, and then let him institute an inquiry if he wished to do so. He joined in the appeal which had been made by the hon. Member for South West Ham.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (Manchester, E.): The Government, in the course of the discussion which has taken place on my hon. Friend's Amendment, have made two attempts to "burke" it. Their first attempt was a "count," and that failed. Then they attempted to "burke" it by a method more decorous, above all longer, but not less effectual. They proposed to refer the matter to a Committee, which in itself is a serious proceeding, but which is made more serious by the fact that the reference to the Committee is apparently to be overloaded, at the suggestion of the hon. Member for Haggerston, by such a large number of questions as will make it absolutely impossible that the Committee should come to any conclusion in a reasonable time. I listened with astonishment to two speeches delivered in the course of the last half-hour, one of them being the speech of the hon. Member for Haggerston. Both the hon. Gentlemen who delivered these speeches announced that they were going to vote with the Government, and both gave extraordinary reasons for the course which they intended to take. The hon. Member for Haggerston told us that he had a large number of brushmakers in his constituency, and that they were deeply injured by the trade in prison-made goods imported from Germany. He said that, notwithstanding, that he meant to support the Government and to vote for the Committee, and that the course proposed by the Government was always the course adopted by a Government in a difficulty. The hon. Member for Haggerston is a sufficiently old and experienced Member of this House to see through and through the dodges of the Government, and when he votes for them on this occasion he will not do so as a *naive* supporter of the Ministerial Bench, but as one who knows that this proposal for inquiry can have no other effect than to delay indefinitely the settlement of this question.

MR. CREMER explained, that what he had said was, that many of his constituents complained that they suffered severely in consequence of the importation of goods manufactured abroad, and that there was strong presumptive evidence that these goods were manufactured in German prisons or elsewhere in Germany. But he had also said that the evidence was not conclusive, and that it was desirable that evidence should be given before a Committee, because statements made before a tribunal of that kind were made under a sense of greater responsibility than was felt by those who made general statements outside that House.

MR. BALFOUR: The hon. Member is right in saying that I am one of the last persons who would desire to misrepresent him. What I ventured to point out to the House was that the hon. Gentleman knows that this particular plan of submitting an awkward question to a Committee is one that has been adopted so frequently that nothing can be made out of it. Then he was followed by another hon. Member. What said he? He told us that he also had a large number of brushmakers in his constituency, but that though he loved them much he hated still more the Member for Birmingham, and that the speech of the hon. Member for Birmingham had so rubbed him up that he was prepared to sacrifice the interests of the brushmakers for the purpose of supporting the Government in the course they propose with regard to an interest in which they are so vitally concerned. Let us, in the light of these two speeches of Members who have brushmakers in their constituencies, consider the position of the Government. They do not really deny that there is a grievance. They have not ventured to meet any specific allegations which have been made. They admit that the brushes are manufactured in German prisons. They do not allege that these brushes are not imported into this country. Still less do they deny that when they are imported the brushes are used to undersell the produce of British workmen. Now, when all these facts are known, I wish to ask the House whether it thinks that a Committee of this House would be of much advantage. What doubtful point is there to clear up before the Government takes action? There is no such thing. If this Committee is proposed it is for one of two reasons—for one of two purposes. It is either in order to smother the question absolutely so that it may be no longer heard of, or it is that the Committee may do for us what the Government are bound to do for us—namely, to exercise their ingenuity to obtain means with which to deal with the question. What should we appoint a Committee for? What do we appoint Committees for? We appoint them to examine evidence on large questions on which the Government have not themselves the machinery to arrive at the truth. We appoint Committees either to collect evidence on doubtful questions, or for the purpose of discussing before those tribunals questions of great controversial Party interest. What we do not appoint Committees for, and I hope never shall, is for the purpose of doing that which we look to the Executive Government to do, however big or however small their majority may be. We look to them for that ingenuity and that resource which, after all, are required in great national affairs. The suggestion of the Government is not one which, in my opinion, should be adopted by the House. They have avoided, or temporarily avoided, one difficult question already in the course of the Session by appointing a Committee. The whole House is not to be divided up into Committee, for the purpose of relieving the Government of that responsibility which ought to lie on them and them alone. Here is a question, the material facts of which are not in doubt. [An hon. MEMBER: "They are."] No; the material facts are not in doubt. There are facts, no doubt, which are not material, but there is no doubt whatever that these goods are made in Germany, that they are not allowed to be sold in Germany in the neighbourhood of the prisons, and there is no doubt that they are imported from Germany. Then, why have a Committee? If we have a Committee for ten years it could not add to that statement. What, then, is a Committee wanted for? You want a Committee to relieve the Government of their responsibility, and I hope my hon. Friend—who is, I know, from a deputation which recently waited on me in Manchester, dealing with a class who naturally feel the grievances of which they are victims,—will not be misled by the offer of the Government. I hope he will not accept the proposal of the Government, which is perfectly illusory and which cannot by any possibility end in giving relief.

MR. J. C. FLYNN (Cork, N.) observed that the right hon. Gentleman had not thought it beneath his dignity to speak about the dodge of the Government, but the truth was the Motion before the House was a dodge of the Unionist Party, who were parading for the moment as the working man's friend. The sponsor of the Motion was a well-known and incorrigible Protectionist. The whole course of the Debate had been interesting and instructive. The House was asked to adopt the peculiar course of putting the cart before the horse. Without one scintilla of clear proof that these prison goods were being used in the manner stated, they were asked to legislate upon the subject. The Government made the fair and sensible proposition that if a grievance existed at all to any appreciable extent, a Committee should be appointed to take evidence, and that, if a case was made out, legislation should follow afterwards. According to the allegations made on the other side, a large portion of Germany, instead of being encamped in a military condition, must be composed of the criminal classes, and the prisons must be full to suffocation. If, as was assured, German prison-made goods were flooding the markets of this country and thereby seriously threatening the great industries of this country, there should be no difficulty in getting evidence of the fact. That evidence could be given in a week, and then the House could, with some show of reason, proceed to legislate in a sensible and satisfactory manner. The hon. Member for West Ham said that free trade was good so long as equal conditions existed; but if the doctrine was sound, why should we stand by and allow the sugar industry, for example, of this country to be crushed out by the bounty-fed sugar of France? They could not stop at the sugar industry, but would be bound to go on from step to step. The truth was, in this matter, the right hon. Member for West Birmingham and the hon. Member for Sheffield were gathered together in one fold under the red flag of Protection. He denied the statement of the Leader of the Opposition that Committees were only appointed in connection with questions of an acutely controversial or political character. The experience of most Members would bear him out that there were a very large number of Committees which sat for the sole purpose of taking evidence on subjects entirely unconnected with acute controversial or political questions, and that, the Committee suggested, was the best way of meeting a difficulty like the present.

Motion agreed to.

SHOPS EARLY CLOSING BILL.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read 2°."—*(Sir J. Lubbock.)*

Motion agreed to.

Bill read 2°, and referred to a Select Committee.

CHEAP TRAINS (LONDON) BILL.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read 2°." *(Sir J. Blundell Maple.)*

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member is not in order. I understand he intimated to the Clerks at the Table that he wished the Bill to be put off until to-morrow.

Sir J. B. MAPLE: I rise to a point of Order. That is quite a misunderstanding. I said that if the Bill came on after 12 o'clock, it was to be deferred until to-morrow. I am sorry if I have been misunderstood, but I am here especially with reference to this Bill, and with the permission of the Government I should like to have it read a Second time. I have received a letter to-day——

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, order. The hon. Member, I understand, gave instructions for this Bill to be deferred.

Sir J. B. MAPLE: If it came no after 12 o'clock; but not if it came on before 12.

Consideration of the Bill deferred till 20th February.

LANDS VALUATION (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

Sir. J. CARMICHAEL (Glasgow, St. Rollox) moved the Second Reading of this Bill, which, he explained, was entirely of a non-Party character, and absolutely of no interest whatever except to those subject to its provisions. There were only two provisions of any importance in the Bill. The main provision was to assimilate the system of assessment with regard to land in the case of minerals, under leases of 31 years and 21 years, to the system at present existing in regard to leases beyond those periods. The result of that would be to bring within the net of taxation a very large amount of property which at the present time escaped taxation altogether, and, by extending the area, it would tend to lessen the burden and make the Valuation Roll more accurate than it was now. The Bill was based upon the Report of a Select Committee of the House, appointed in the year 1890, of which the present Lord Advocate was Chairman, and it largely embodied the recommendations laid down by that Select Committee. There was no new principle involved, and lessees would, of course, have the right to all relief given under the Valuation (Scotland) Act, 1854. The only other provision was to extend to Magistrates and Councillors of burghs the same rights as were given to Commissioners of Supply, to deal with the Valuation question by Committee, instead of by the whole corporate body. He begged to move that the Bill be now read a Second time.

Sir CHARLES J. PEARSON (Edinburgh and St. Andrew's University) said, he wished the hon. Member had explained a little more fully the provisions of the Bill. It did appear to him that more should be said than had been said by the hon. Gentleman, to satisfy the House as to the necessity or expediency of such a change in the method of taxation as that proposed by the Bill. For himself, he should like to hear more as to the grounds upon which the change was desired, and to have a free hand as to the second or third clause of the Bill. With regard to the more important part of the Bill, he believed that was in conformity with the recommendations of the Select Committee which sat some few years ago. That was a recommendation arrived at unanimously by the Committee.

SIR J. CARMICHAEL said, the Committee were unanimously of opinion that the law required alteration, and the Amendments embodied in this Bill were the Amendments suggested by the Committee.

SIR C. J. PEARSON said, that according to his recollection the Committee did not commit themselves to the Amendments which were embodied in the Bill. He was under the impression the Committee reported alternative Amendments. One of the two alternatives had been chosen, and it seemed to him there would be some difficulty in working that alternative out, and that in practice it would introduce into the Valuation Roll some unreality. The improvements on the land which was under lease, although they belonged to the tenant, were to be entered in the ownership part, so that they would introduce in the ownership part a class of persons who were not really owners in the ordinary sense at all. That, in his opinion, would be a course which would tend to disturb the uniformity of the Valuation Roll. He therefore thought they were entitled to a little more explanation than they had as yet received.

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. BALFOUR, Clackmannan, &c.) said, that, as the right hon. and learned Gentleman knew, the difficulty in dealing with cases of this kind had arisen from the fact that it would not be just to put this tax upon the owner who received the rent apart from the improvement. Yet in comparison with the rest of the territory of the country this property was escaping taxation. He therefore thought they would all be agreed that whatever division took place between the landlord and tenant, the different parts of the territory of the country should pay proportionately. The object of the Bill was to bring that result about. As between landlord and tenant it would not be just to make the landlord, who was receiving the rent of the unimproved subject, pay as the landlord of the whole during the currency of the lease. Whatever might happen when the lease came to an end was another affair. In the meantime, inasmuch as the improvement had been made by the tenant for his own purposes, it seemed only right he should be the person to pay. Even in the Act of 1854 there were already cases in which the ownership and occupancy were artificially re-arranged. But any points of that sort were rather for Committee than for this stage. The Bill was intended to carry out a very useful reform, and might very well be read a second time.

MR. J. CALDWELL (Mid Lanark) did not altogether agree with the Lord Advocate. There would be no injustice in the landlord paying the taxes and keeping up the uniformity of the valuation roll, when on the expiry of the lease he would become the owner of all the improvements. He thought the introduction of this new principle in the valuation roll in Scotland would be fraught with a good deal of difficulty. He did not intend to resist the Second Reading of the Bill, though the measure involved a good many changes, which would require to be very carefully considered when they got into Committee.

Motion put, and agreed to.

SPORT REGULATION BILL.

MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough), in moving the Second Reading of this Bill, said its object was to put a stop to the cruelty of hunting and shooting animals kept in confinement; and that it received the support of sportsmen, particularly Tory sportsmen, all over the country. He hoped it would be allowed to pass its Second Reading and go into Committee, when he would be ready to accept any reasonable Amendments.

VISCOUNT CRANBOURNE (Rochester) said, that though every one should sympathise with the motive of the hon. Gentleman, it would be rather rash to agree to his Bill straight off. Besides, it was a Bill of a more extensive character than the hon. Gentleman had given the House to understand. It would stop, not alone pigeon shooting and rabbit coursing, but also stag hunting and pheasant shooting. He was a sportsman himself in an humble way, and he had no great sympathy with rabbit coursing or pigeon shooting, but because those sports did not come up to his ethics of sport was no reason why he should try to prevent any of his fellow-countrymen who liked them from indulging in them. If it were accepted that human beings should not inflict sufferings on animals, then let all such sports be stopped, for they were all exactly on the same basis. The amount of intense suffering caused by a day's pheasant shooting could hardly be exaggerated; but that did not prevent him from participating in the sport, because, personally, he did not hold the extreme view that the suffering of animals was to be the limit of human enjoyment in sport. But, on the other hand, if he were to be allowed to shoot pheasants he could not in reason say that other people should not be allowed to shoot pigeons. Legislation must rely on a stronger basis of logical consistency than the hon. Gentleman in charge of the Bill had put forward. The Bill would also stop stag hunting, a sport in which an enormous number of persons were interested, not only as a means of recreation, but as a means of livelihood. The hon. Gentleman said it made a difference if the stag was kept in confinement. But why—what difference did it make? He certainly was not prepared to stop his fellow-countrymen from stag hunting on such feeble arguments as the hon. Gentleman had put forward. If the opinion was held that the sufferings of the animals were terrible, that sporting ought to be prohibited, then put a stop to sporting altogether; but until they resolved to take such an extreme course, the Bill rested on a totally illogical basis, and ought not to be passed into law.

Mr. H. C. F. LUTTRELL (Devon, Tavistock) supported the Bill. He said the question was, what was sport? There were different kinds of sport, some of them noble, and some of them far from noble. But the idea most people had of sport was to pursue the wild animal with some purpose, generally that of obtaining food. [*Cries of* "The fox!" *and Laughter.*] The fox, at any rate, was not kept in confinement—[An hon. Member: "The hounds are"]—except in certain cases; and where the fox was kept in confinement few people would defend the sport. The noble Lord said that there was wanton cruelty in all sport. There might be cruelty in sport, but it was not always wanton, like hunting a rabbit turned out of a sack or a deer loosed from a box. His experience of stag hunting was the chase of the wild stag, which was killed to be eaten. He should support the Bill.

Viscount Cranbourne.

Mr. E. LEES (Birkenhead) said, that a vast field was opened by the consideration of this Bill. It was delightful to one's feelings as a sportsman to find a Gentleman on the Radical Benches denouncing the practice of hunting bagged foxes; but there was a great deal in the Bill which could not be passed without careful discussion. He yielded to no man in his endeavours to conduct sport without cruelty; and he differed from his noble Friend's opinion that there was a vast amount of cruelty in pheasant shooting, though he admitted that it was the highest form of skill with the gun and the lowest form of sport. He could well appreciate the sentiments of the hon. Member who had just sat down, and who came from a country where the wild stag was hunted. Beside that sport, no doubt, the hunting of the tame stag was an insignificant affair. Even a good run with the fox-hounds hardly surpassed the hunting of the wild stag with the Devon and Somerset hounds. But if the hunting of the tame stag was not a high class of sport, there was no cruelty associated with it; and why should it be done away with? Had the hon. Member who introduced the Bill ever hunted the stag himself? He did not say that the stag preferred to be hunted rather than to be at liberty, but every precaution was taken to prevent cruelty. The stag was well kept, and he was hunted many times. He did not defend the practice as a sport, but if there was no cruelty in the system, and many persons found pleasure in the pursuit, why did hon. Members wish to put a stop to it? After referring to his own experience of the hunting of animals kept in captivity while following the late Lord Wolverton's hounds, the hon. Member called attention to Her Majesty's buckhounds, which were kept, he said, for the purpose mainly of hunting a tame stag. This Royal pack of hounds had been kept up for many years at the expense of the country in order to provide sport through the hunting of a tame stag. Though many persons were interested in, and found pleasure in, the pursuit, he did not go so far as to say that it was real sport; and if the hon. Member in charge of the Bill could show that there was any cruelty connected with it he would be prepared to support him in putting an end to the practice. No real sportsman wished to perpetuate cruelty; the maintenance of cruelty was alien to the instincts of all sportsmen. Was any hon. Member, however, prepared to say that there was any cruelty connected with the establishment of the buckhounds? [An hon. MEMBER: "Yes."] If any hon. Members were prepared to maintain this, he wished then to ask how it was that in a thin House, and without adequate notice, the hon. Member should be so bold as to ask that the House should abolish a practice which for many years past had been carried on under the sanction of a Department and of an official of the Government, who had in his gift a considerable amount of patronage?

MR. A. C. MORTON rose in his place, and claimed to move: "That the Question be now put," but Mr. Deputy Speaker withheld his assent, and declined then to put the Question.

Debate resumed.

MR. ELLIOT LEES (Birkenhead) thought that the hon. Member not only wished to destroy the amusement of the people, but to destroy them without debate. Before such a Bill as this was passed the question of the existence of the buckhounds must be faced. Why did not the hon. Member give the House some instances of the cruelty which attended the pursuit of these animals?

MR. MORTON: I could have given you hundreds of instances if I had had time.

MR. LEES: Yes; but the hon. Member, in moving the Second Reading of the Bill, has not done so; and if he can give us those instances I shall be prepared to give them my consideration.

It being 12 of the Clock, the Debate stood adjourned.

SEED POTATOES SUPPLY (IRELAND) BILL.—(No. 117.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington), said, he did not wish in any way to oppose the Second Reading of the Bill, but he desired to call attention to the very different treatment Ireland received from that which England received. This was a measure of which they all approved, and it placed public money at the disposal of the small farmers of Ireland. Although public money was freely lent to small farmers, because they had a compact body of supporters in this House, it treated with scant courtesy the grievances of the English farmers, although the English farmer was financially in a worse position than the Irish farmer. This difference of treatment was a matter which was worth some consideration.

MR. J. MORLEY would remind the hon. Member that this Bill did not propose to make a present to the Irish farmers, but only advanced them money by way of loan. Such a loan was made in 1890 and 1891, when the right hon. Member for Manchester (Mr. A. Balfour) was Chief Secretary, and of that loan only about £2,000 was outstanding.

MR. BARTLEY: But money is not lent to the English farmer.

MR. J. MORLEY: I am not concerned with that; it is not in my Department.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL wished to ask whether the Local Government Board retained any control over the selection of the seed potatoes, or whether the matter was left entirely to the Boards of Guardians. Those bodies had a prejudice in favour of "Champions," and there was a general feeling among experts in the north of Ireland that that variety was rather worn out. He had received several letters on that point, and he therefore inquired in whom the discretion would be vested as to the selection of the seed potatoes, and whether any control would be exercised.

DR. TANNER (Mid. Cork) said, that in many cases the "Champion" potato was found to have fallen away from the standard which had made it popular, but the facts were well-known, and the Boards of Guardians in the south of Ireland were perfectly capable of dealing with the matter.

MR. T. SEXTON (Kerry, N.) said, he was assured by Guardians and others capable of forming an accurate opinion, that the time allowed by the Bill for repayment was too short. As soon as distress was felt from a short potato crop, there was a great increase in the price of potatoes, and when the Guardians began to buy there was a further increase, until the price of potatoes became double what it was a year ago. The result was that the prices charged by Guardians was so high that farmers would be unable to meet the loan out of the next year's potato crop. He thought two years in a season of distress with the poorest people in the poorest part of Ireland was an exacting term, and he urged that it should be extended.

*MR. D. CRILLY (Mayo, N.) said, these poor people had shown their willingness to repay the money advanced by the Government, but it was clear from the reports of the Local Government Board that they could not meet their liabilities within two years. He asked the Chief Secretary to comply with the reasonable and humane request of the hon. Member for North Kerry and extend the time for repayment. Some of the Irish Boards of Guardians were not disposed to supply seed potatoes unless easier terms were given.

MR. J. MORLEY said, they had appointed a number of temporary Inspectors—he believed 18 or 20—whose special object it was to examine the purchases of potatoes made by the Boards of Guardians, and without whose authority no purchases under this Act could be made. In regard to the desire for an extension of time, it was a remarkable thing that of the loan made in 1891 only £2,000 remained outstanding, and that was entirely in three extremely poor unions. The contention was that if a longer time was given they would have no security that those who had the payment of the advances would be called upon to repay them, as they might die. If a number of years were taken, then the burden would devolve upon the ratepayers. He would remind the hon. Member for North Kerry that they took power in this Bill for the Local Government Board to extend the period of time in case there should be some good reason. The Local Government Board would not be sorry to do without this power, but after the circumstances which had been brought to the attention of the House by the hon. Member for North Kerry on that and on previous occasions, he thought it would not be safe to deprive them of the power of giving a longer time for paying than under the ordinary conditions. If that hon. Gentleman would place his reliance on the wide and extended experience of the Local Government Board officials, he would find that the Government, in framing the Bill, had not gone far wide of the mark.

MR. M. M. BODKIN (Roscommon, N.) said, he had not risen before because he had hoped that the right hon. Gentleman would have assented to the request of the hon. Member for Kerry. The right hon. Gentleman had not done so, and yet he had given the House additional arguments in favour of the view of that hon. Member. The Chief Secretary had said, that the Local Government Board were reluctant to accept this dispensing power; but the fact was, they were reluctant to accept it because they did not want to use it. The right hon. Gentleman had referred to the prompt payment of the money which had been previously advanced, but did not know the amount of pressure, and poverty, and suffering which was entailed by the enforcement of that prompt payment. The Exchequer was absolutely secure in this matter. The rates were also amply secured, but if the ratepayers and Guardians were pressed for payment, the people in their turn would be pressed also. The people were already in a condition of want, and the large price charged for the seed would nearly cover the entire price of the crop they would raise from it. Some remark had been made about the change of tenancies making repayment insecure, but Irish tenants did not change their places like English labourers; they stuck to their holdings, unless the landlords turned them out. He wished the right hon. Gentleman, who was responsible as the guardian of the Exchequer, had considered more the position of the poor Irish agriculturist under existing circumstances, bearing in mind that the British Exchequer would have no risk whatever, and that the Irish Party voiced the unanimous opinion of their constituents, that a little longer time for paying the money would be a substantial benefit to the destitute tenants.

Bill read 2 .

House adjourned at Twenty minutes past Twelve of the clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 20th February 1895.

The House met at Twelve of the clock.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

BRAY TOWNSHIP IMPROVEMENT BILL.

Bill read 2°.

CROYDON CORPORATION BILL.

Bill read 2°.

GLASGOW CORPORATION AND POLICE BILL.

Bill read 2°.

Mr. J. LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet), who had on the Paper a Notice of Motion for the rejection of the Bill, but who was not in his place when the Order was called, entering the House from behind the Speaker's Chair, said, he wished to appeal to Mr. Speaker on a point of Order. He understood that the Bill had been read a second time. He had on the Paper a Notice of Opposition, and, from inquiries he had made he was led to believe that the fact of placing a Notice of Opposition to the Bill upon the Paper would have the effect of postponing the Second Reading of the Bill to another day, as the Bill was not put down "By Order." He must therefore protest against the course that had been pursued in the face of the Notice upon the Paper.

Mr. E. WASON (Ayrshire, S.) said, he was asked to move the Second Reading, and, having no instructions to the contrary from the right hon. Gentleman, he complied with the request.

*Mr. SPEAKER: The Motion was made in a full House, in the absence of the right hon. Gentleman, and, there being no objection raised, I had no alternative but to put the Motion.

Mr. J. LOWTHER said his notice was handed in at the Table and it appeared on the Notice Paper. He had asked the Clerk at the Table if the Bill was going to be taken, and he was led to understand that, as the Bill was not down "By Order," it would no doubt, in the usual course of opposed Bills, stand over until another day. On that understanding, and believing that the Bill would be passed over, he had gone from his place behind the Speaker's Chair on a matter of public business. As the general rule had not been followed, he should consider it his duty to to oppose the Bill at a future stage.

Mr. SPEAKER: I must point out that, at the time the Second Reading was moved the right hon. Gentleman was not present; and there being no opposition, the Second Reading was passed.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

RATING OF MACHINERY BILL.

Order for Second Reading, read.

Sir W. H. HOULDSWORTH (Manchester, N.W.) moved,—"That this Bill be read a second time." He said it had been before the House no fewer than five times, and on every occasion it had passed the Second Reading by considerable majorities. If the majority last year were not as high as that of 1893 he did not suppose that the Bill was in less favour, but simply that its supporters had to some extent become tired of supporting it by large majorities when they found that, owing to the forms of the House and the pressure of business—especially the Government taking the days appropriated to private Members—it had been impossible to get this Bill further than its Second Reading. To show the great support it had always received he might mention that no fewer than 338 Members of the House had voted for it at different times. The object of the Bill was simple. In the first place, it was to define the law with with regard to the rating of machinery and tools in hereditaments where machinery and tools were at work. The law was now thoroughly uncertain upon the subject. Up to a short time ago the law was supposed to be known, and the practice was what was supposed to be the law. But recent decisions had upset the law, and instead of defining it these decisions, given on special cases, had tended only to make confusion worse confounded. The consequence was, that at the present moment the condition of

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

things throughout the country was, that there was a different practice as to assessment in nearly every one of the different Unions. Even in the same Union the Assessment Committee sometimes applied a recent decision in one case and not in another. There had been a remarkable case in the Chorlton Union in Lancashire, where Messrs. Whitworth's industrial works were assessed on an entirely different principle from that on which the Assessment Committee assessed other industries in the same Union. This promoted litigation, which was constantly going on; money was being wasted and the industries of the country harassed by it, and, what was worse still, these law-suits were often compromised in a back door way, and there was no knowing whether justice had been done. The second object of the Bill was not only to define the law clearly, but to make it as clear as the law in Scotland and Ireland. He knew no reason whatever why the law in the three different parts of the kingdom should be on different bases. It created an immense injustice between the industries of Scotland and Ireland compared with those of England. In Scotland and Ireland there was no doubt at all with regard to the law or practice, and there everything worked smoothly. The supporters of the Bill claimed that in defining the law Parliament would be justified not only in defining it, but in making it the same as in Scotland and Ireland. The principle in Scotland and Ireland was simple, and was in practice over a great part of England—that hereditaments containing machinery should be assessed with the motive power and all that properly belonged to that hereditament; on the other hand, what the tenant would bring in, in the form of machinery and tools to do his work, should not be rated. He doubted whether there was a difference of opinion with regard to the principle he had indicated. A difficulty which could only be overcome by a Committee of the House was, to frame words in an Act of which would thoroughly carry out that principle. On the different occasions on which the Rating of Machinery Bill had been introduced the Government in power had given it its support. [*Cries of* "No!" *and* "Yes!"] At any rate, every President of the Local Government Board representing the Government of the day had given the Bill his support and had spoken strongly in favour of it. Lord Davey, then Sir Horace Davey, had expressed the following opinion on the subject:—

> "The present state of the law was unsatisfactory. It was incomprehensible both to laymen and to lawyers, and it was uncertain in its operation. Uncertainty led to litigation, which had to be paid for by the litigant. Some Assessment Committees, while professing not to rate machinery, still considered that it enhanced the value of the premises, and the effect in some districts was, that the value of machinery was fully taken into account in the enhanced value of the premises. That appeared to him to be artificial and unsatisfactory in the present condition of things. There could be no doubt that the law ought to be defined and made clear and distinct and equal in its application to all parts of the country and all classes of the community."

That was the basis of their contention, and it was quoted with approbation by the then President of the Local Government Board. With the authority of a Cabinet Minister, the majorities obtained for the Bill in the House of Commons, and Assessment Committees throughout the country supporting the Bill, it was unnecessary for him to argue the matter further. But he would like to say a few words with regard to the opposition they had to meet in that House. It appeared to him that it proceeded from four quarters. First of all, there were the Members representing agricultural constituencies, although they were not at all opposed to the Bill. No doubt the most formidable opposition came from the agricultural Members. The second quarter from which opposition came was from a few Members who represented the Sunderland district; then there were some Irish and Scotch Members; and, lastly, several Members representing the city of Birmingham. He could not help thinking that the opposition of the agricultural Members arose very much from misapprehension; they constantly represented to the House that the capitalist manufacturers desired to relieve themselves of a burden which they had hitherto borne, and to place it on the agricultural community; but he did not think that was a fair representation of the case. As far as the present practice was concerned, if this Bill were passed into law, over the greater part of England and Wales it would make no difference whatever. At present, Assessment Committees were not putting this high view of the law into practice, and the practice came much nearer to the provisions of the Bill than to the law as it was represented in certain quarters. What this Bill would do would be, to prevent a change of practice which was being insidiously introduced to the detriment of our industries, and to prevent litigation and insure uniformity. He believed this would be effected without imposing any burden whatever on the agricultural interest. He did not understand the opposition of the Sunderland Members, but it seemed to him that they were giving a friendly start to a most enterprising firm of surveyors, who were making a livelihood, perhaps a fortune, out of harassing manufactures throughout the country. He was not a Separatist, and did not wish to divide the United Kingdom into different parts, but he thought that, when they were only asking for the same privilege and just laws for England, as already existed in Scotland and Ireland, the Irish and Scotch Members should at least give them their support. He thought the opposition which came from Birmingham was a fair one. There was in Birmingham a particular system by which the assessments were made, not by valuation in one sense, not by taking the actual value of the hereditament, but in industrial concerns which had motive power, by taking a rate of from 40s. to 50s. per horse-power as a means by which to arrive at the assessment. He saw no reason whatever why, if this Bill passed, that system should not still be carried into effect in Birmingham, even without special provision in the Bill, because the Act would only lay down the principle on which these assessments should be made, and there might be various methods of arriving at that assessment. The hon. Member for South Birmingham had on former occasions given some very striking figures as to the enormous change which this Bill would create in Birmingham. Some years ago, however, he had made a very careful calculation of the rate of 40s. to 50s. per horse-power, and he had found that, in the industries to which he knew that he could apply it, the rate would bring out almost completely the amount of the assessment which would be derived by taking the value of the hereditament of the industrial businesses and the value of the motive power. He cited instances which showed that in this way no change would be made. He appealed to the Government and to the President of the Local Government Board to give them facilities in order that this Bill might go to a Grand Committee. It seemed to him desirable that a Bill of this character should pass by a large majority, and its consideration by a Grand Committee was, therefore, eminently suitable, because it was in the details of the Bill that care must be observed. They wished to disturb the present practice as little as possible, and no doubt Assessment Committees would carry out the principles laid down in their own way.

*MR. M. OLDROYD (Dewsbury) seconded the Motion.

MAJOR F. CARNE-RASCH (Essex, S.E.) in moving the rejection of the Bill, hoped the House would not think that he was actuated by any hostile feeling towards the industries of the country. Some hon. Members appeared to think that, if they excepted a certain class of manufactures from taxation, the money so removed would fall from the clouds; but it would, of course, be contributed in future by other members of the community who helped to make up the taxation of the country. The effect of the Bill would be to put extra taxation on a class of men who absolutely looked forward with dread to every Saturday night, lest they should not be able to find the money to pay the wages of their labourers; and who, therefore, were already in the very depths of agricultural distress. The farmer was rated on his profits, but the manufacturer was not. Hon. Members opposite thought it was wrong, and bad finance, to tax the machinery of production; but, in voting for this Bill, were they not proposing to tax the machinery of production by endeavouring to shift taxation from the mill-owner to the farmer? For the earth was the machinery of production to the farmer, and by that machinery food was produced for about one-third of the people of the country. Hon. Members opposite claimed to be Free Traders, and yet by this Bill they sought to tax the agricultural producer and even the earth itself. The hon. Member for Middlesbrough had stated, with absolute truth, in a speech on this question, that if the Bill passed it would have the effect of taking a burden off the shoulders of the manufacturer and placing it on the shoulders of the shopkeeper, and through the shopkeeper on those of the working man; and he thought that those hon. Members who professed to keep a sharp eye on the Labour question would do well to seriously consider the matter before they voted for this Bill, which was retrogressive and reactionary in its character. Hon. Members on both sides of the House, who were in favour of this Bill, supported the Amendment to the Address complaining that the Government had done nothing to relieve agricultural distress, and declaring that the agricultural interest was overtaxed; yet they were now going to vote for a measure which would unfairly still further increase the burden on land to the advantage of the manufacturer. It was as if he moved to exempt land in East Anglia from payment of the tithe rent-charge and to place it on the textile manufacturers of Lancashire or the ironworkers of Yorkshire. The part of the country which he represented had felt the weight of the prevailing agricultural depression heavier than any other part of the kingdom, as might be confirmed by the report of Mr. Pringle. Therefore he felt very strongly on the matter, and would most earnestly appeal to hon. Members not to yet further add to the burdens and disadvantages of the farmer by voting for the Second Reading of this Bill.

Mr. A. F. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke), in seconding the Amendment, said his object in doing so was to protect the agricultural community from the injustice the Bill would inflict upon them. There was no class more heavily weighted with local taxation than the farmer, and he was not in a position to bear even the smallest addition to it. He opposed the Bill on the broad ground that it was wrong and unfair to relieve one class of property from taxation at the expense of another. If there were to be any change in ratable assessment let it be made all round, in common justice. If the law of assessment were to be amended, let it be done on the principle recommended by the Select Committee of 1887. On that Committee sat several hon. Members who supported the introduction of this Bill, among them the hon. Baronet who had just moved the Second Reading, Mr. Tomlinson, and Sir B. Samuelson. The Committee unanimously reported that it was most important that there should be uniformity in assessment, and recommended that the whole subject of rating should be dealt with comprehensively by the Government with the least possible delay. If anything were to be done in the matter it should be by a comprehensive measure introduced by the Government or some responsible Member; and the whole question of the re-adjustment of local taxation should be taken into consideration. To that course the agriculturists would certainly not complain, for through it they believed they would meet with some measure of justice. He hoped the hon. Member who moved the Second Reading was wrong in anticipating that the Government would actively support the Bill on the present occasion, seeing that Mr. Ritchie in 1892 and Mr. Fowler in 1893, who were then Presidents of the Board of Trade, declared to a deputation of the Chamber of Agriculture that they should take up a position of neutrality in regard to the measure. The present President of the Board was a friend of the farmer, and was in favour of reducing his assessments, and therefore he would hardly vote for the Bill. Why should manufacturers be relieved? He did not deny that there was a difference in the way of assessing machinery, just as there was in the way of assessing land; and he agreed that there ought to be some comprehensive scheme for re-adjusting taxation. But he objected to any piecemeal Legislation, and had, therefore, voted consistently against this Bill; and he hoped the House would to-day make it plain that it was determined not to relieve manufacturers by throwing extra burdens upon agriculturists. The total amount of property assessed for Income Tax in England and Wales, under all schedules, was no less than £608,000,000, but the amount for land and houses under Schedule A only came to £169,000,000, so that property to the value of £439,000,000 paid not rates at all. That was a very important fact. In his opinion, personal property ought to pay rates, though he had no hope of Legislation in that direction. But if they accepted the Biil they would add to that great amount of property which did not pay rates, and surely the House would hesitate before laying any further burdens upon land and houses already so overweighted with local taxation There was another point with regard to the rating of such property as railways and breweries. At present, railway companies paid a large amount of rates in respect of works at Crewe and elsewhere, but if the Bill was passed an immense amount of movble machinery at these places would escape taxation altogether. Surely the House did not think that the great railway companies were not able to pay poor rates, like the agriculturists. Then, brewers had a great amount of movable machinery which, under the Bill, would be exempt from the payment of rates. At present the farmer paid rates upon every acre of land he occupied, and not, as would be fair, only upon his house and premises. The result was, that a farmer who paid a rent of £200 a year for a farm of 400 acres, would if the assessment was 2s. 6d. in the £, pay £25. But a village shopkeeper, whose income was probably as large, but whose rent was only £24, would pay £3 in rates. When hon. Gentlemen realised the unjust way in which land was assessed at the present time, he was sure they would not be willing to legislate in a haphazard and piecemeal fashion by passing a Bill of this kind. He opposed the Bill on the part of agriculturists, not because they objected to machinery or wished to injure manufacturers, but because they objected to relieve manufacturers by having the burdens of manufacturers placed on their shoulders.

*MR. M. OLDROYD observed, that, as had been said again and again, the object of the Bill was to make the law, as it stood, clear and simple. And the necessity for the measure was the more pronounced, because the conditions of rating were not the same in England as they were in Scotland and Ireland. The law, as interpreted by Lord Esher, was quite unintelligible, not only to the lay mind, but to the legal mind. Hon. Gentlemen who opposed the Bill seemed to think that the measure was intended as a relief to the manufacturing interest. What were the facts? Simply that, whereas machinery was not now ratable by the usage and practice of the country generally, it had become so ratable by legal decision, and conspicuously as the result of the efforts of the firm of gentlemen referred to by the hon. Baronet in his speech, who seemed to be making a livelihood by seeking to impose a new and technical interpretation of the law on the different unions. The illustration given by the hon. and gallant Member for Essex was a decidedly exaggerated view of the case. It might apply in Sunderland, but no such case could be found in Essex. He was quite sure that the hon. and gallant Member would be willing to apply the same rule to machinery as to land in regard to assessment. What the Bill proposed was, that not only the shell, but also such parts of the machinery as appertained to the letting value of the premises should be assessed. The hon. and gallant Member would not suggest that the stock on the premises should be assessed any more than that farm stock should be assessed; and what they contended was, that the machinery which was introduced into the premises after they were let, and which was not comprised in the letting value, should not be assessed. Otherwise, one rule would be applied to farming and another to manufacturing in the same union. He wanted to know how the cases referred to by the hon. Member could be affected by this Bill. The shopkeeper would remain in exactly the same position.

MR. JEFFREYS said, his point was, that if there was to be a comprehensive scheme they should come in for part of it.

*MR. OLDROYD said, they were not now discovering a comprehensive scheme nor seeking relief from taxation; they were simply asking that undue taxation should not be heaped upon them. They asked that the existing uncertainty should be removed. The hon. Member had just now said, that the sufferings of the farmers were such, that they had the greatest anxiety at the end of the week as to where the means were to come from to meet the payment of wages. He did not know whether that appertained to all farmers, but it certainly appertained to some manufacturers who had a much larger wages-bill to pay than farmers. He challenged the figures quoted by the hon. Member opposite, and failed to see what argument he based on them. With regard to the railways, the assessment would be almost the same as it was now. He was sure the alteration would be very infinitesimal. Then, as to brewers, he did not think that under this Bill the assessment of brewers would be seriously altered, because a large part of the plant in breweries was connected with the structure of the building. He might say also, with regard to the textile industries, a very considerable amount of their machinery would remain ratable under the Bill. Therefore it was like misleading the House to advance, as an argument against the Bill, that the machinery in such cases would escape taxation. There was only one other point which he wished to lay before the House, and that was a practical difficulty which would arise in the various unions if this Bill passed. A fair and proper valuation of machinery would be a delicate and difficult task. Machinery was a very broad term, and applied not only to old but to new machinery. If spindles or looms or sewing machines were to be assessed, he was sure that very great difficulties would arise as to the real value of those machines. Old machinery not adapted to the times would have an additional burden thrown upon it, although for commercial purposes it was not equal to other machinery. He thought the arguments adduced by the hon. Baronet who introduced the Bill were conclusive, that the real state of the law should be defined. He believed that the Bill would make the law clear, would make it consistent wich the law of Ireland and Scotland, and he felt certain the House would affirm its principle as it had done in previous Sessions by a very large majority.

SIR R. PAGET (Somerset, Wells) said, he understood the hon. Member to say that the object of the Bill was to remove uncertainties in the law with regard to this matter. But it was suggested that they should get the Bill into Committee in order to introduce into it what was now not in it. The position, then, was this: the Bill was brought in to remove uncertainties—to define what was to be rated; but the particulars were not in the Bill, and they must be brought in elsewhere. No one took exception to the mode in which the Bill was introduced, but in a moderately long speech they had heard few arguments with which they were not familiar. There had been a reference to the horrors which would accrue if this Bill did not become law. They had heard that before. They had been told what injustice would be done if the present law continued, but now they had a totally different matter presented to them. Everything was minimised. They were now told that if they passed this Bill it would make no difference at all. [" No."] They had been practically told that if the House passed the Bill it would make no difference whatever. If the Bill was minimised in this way, surely the case was extremely weak, and there was no sufficient reason why the House should give its Assent to the Bill. The second kind of argument used was that the law ought to be assimilated to that of Scotland and Ireland. He would like to ask those who upheld that contention, were they prepared to give to the suffering agriculturists of England the benefits that Ireland has got? were they prepared to give to England generally, that lavish expenditure which it appeared Ireland had only to ask for to get? He did not think that the supposed necessity for assimilating the law in this way was a sufficient inducement to pass this Bill. This proposal amounted to a transfer of burdens from one class to another. There was no escaping that. But was this a time when the agricultural or any other industry ought to be oppressed with additional burdens? In the present condition of things the House would be very ill-advised, in his opinion, to give an assent to the Second Reading of such a Bill as this. He had no wish to prevent changes in the law of rating. His desire was to see wholesale and sweeping changes, but he regarded this measure as mere fiddling with the fringe of the question. So far back as 1887 a Committee examined minutely into this matter and came to the conclusion that the whole subject of rating should be dealt with comprehensively by the Government with the least possible delay. The least possible delay appeared to be seven or eight years. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board had recently given them in the public prints the benefit of the views he held with respect to the Law of Assessment. He hardly thought that the right hon. Gentleman would say that the law as its tood was in a state of perfection. The matter cried aloud for reform. The hon. Member who had just addressed the House did not, he thought, quite appreciate the figures used by the hon. Member for Hampshire. He understood his hon. Friend to say that the total value of property assessed to the Income Tax amounted in round figures to £608,000,000, while the total annual value of property on which local rates were levied amounted to only £188,000,000, and he showed that a vast amount of property in the country escaped local rates, and that the property of smaller value had to bear the whole of the burden of the rates, to which this Bill, if carried, would add. Then it was said that they were to pass the Bill on account of theu ncertainty of the Law. But was there any uncertainty? The Courts of Law had always acted on one principle. Disquisitions in the Law had been made at different times by different Judges, but they were always founded on the same principle. He contended therefore, that there was no such uncertainty of the Law as some hon. Members had attempted to show. It would be found in every one of the decisions, that so long as the machinery was necessary for carrying on the business for which the factory was created, it was held to be legally assessable, not *per se*, but as enhancing the value of the building. The question of the rating of machinery was no doubt one of intricacy in some respects, and he would like to ask whether this Bill was to apply to water and gas works? His recollection was that when this Bill was introduced on a previous occasion the promoters declared that they did not intend it to affect either gas or water works. If that was so there would at once be an inequality introduced by Statute. So far as equality of taxation went, he was entirely in favour of anything that would tend to that. Moreover, he understood that to be the principle of Her Majesty's Government. If they were to touch this question at all it should be taken up with a bolder hand, on the principle, the Government themselves had taken up, and it should not be left to a private Member to deal with a question which involved the extra taxation of some of Her Majesty's subjects and the relief of others. Equality of taxation had been declared to be the leading principle of the question. He trusted that nothing would be done that was likely to add to the burdens of a class that was already over-taxed, in order that others, who were better able to pay, might be relieved. In former years, the attitude of the Government of the day, whether Liberal or Conservative, had always been one of neutrality with regard to this Bill, but not invariably of benevolent neutrality. In his opinion, the measure was not one that ought to be passed, the case which its promoters had attempted to make out not being proven.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (MR. G. J. SHAW-LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central) said, that he should take the same course as was taken on former occasions by his predecessors, the present Secretary of State for India and Mr. Ritchie. He meant that he should leave this question to the judgment of the House, and should not attempt to influence that judgment by any Ministerial pressure. He was himself in favour of this Bill, because, in his opinion, the law with regard to the rating of machinery was at present in an extremely unsatisfactory state. If he could believe that the Bill would affect the agricultural interest injuriously, by shifting a burden from the shoulders of manufacturers on to those of farmers and others concerned in agriculture, he would not support the measure. He quite agreed that it would be very wrong to add to the burdens of agriculturists at the present time, for this was certainly not an opportune moment for doing anything of that kind. He thought, however, that those who opposed the Bill were under a misapprehension with respect to its probable results. He was convinced that the burdens of no farmer would be increased if this Bill were passed.

SIR R. H. PAGET (Somerset, Wells) observed that that was not the view of the Central Chamber of Agriculture.

*MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE said, that he was only expressing his own opinion. It appeared to be considered by some hon. Members that manufacturers were rated now in respect of their machinery, and that the effect of the Bill would be to relieve manufacturers, and to impose upon others the burdens from which they would be relieved. That was a complete misapprehension, for the almost universal practice throughout the country was not to assess movable machinery. The hon. Member from Essex had put a hypothetical case. He supposed the case of a mill rated at £1,000 a year, £200 representing the value of the shell, or building, and £800 the value of the machinery; and he contended that, if this Bill should pass into law, the mill would in future only be rated at £200. But such a case as this did not exist; if there were a mill of such a value, with machinery of such enormous value in it, which he much doubted, it might be safely said that it was rated at £200 at the present time, so that the Bill would leave matters exactly where they stood now. The general practice for Assessment Committees for generations past had been not to assess movable machinery. In the last few years, however, there had been decisions in the Law Courts which had shown that that practice was not altogether in accordance with the law. There had been cases in which it had been laid down by Judges that certain classes of movable machinery ought to be rated; and if those decisions were acted upon a very large amount of machinery, which had hitherto escaped assessment, would be assessed, and the burdens of the manufacturers owning that machinery would be considerably increased. These decisions had caused much surprise to a great many Assessment Committees, and a great many lawyers also. He did not doubt that the view of the Judges of the law as it stood was right, but it certainly was not in accord with the practice of Assessment Committees. In 1887, a Committee of that House considered the whole question, and came to the conclusion that there ought to be a comprehensive reform; and they recommended that, pending that reform, the practice that had prevailed among Assessment Committees in respect of movable machinery should continue. The position, therefore, was anomalous. A Committee of that House had recommended that Assessment Committees should not observe the law as laid down by the Judges in the High Court.

SIR R. H. PAGET remarked that the Report of the Committee contained nothing to that effect.

*MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE said that he was informed that the Committee recommended that the prevailing practice should be continued. There could be no doubt that the practice had continued, and that Assessment Committees still exempted movable machinery. Their practice, therefore, was opposed to the law as laid down in the Courts.

MR. W. E. M. TOMLINSON (Preston) said, that what the right hon. Gentleman had in his mind was a Resolution passed by the Committee. That Resolution was not, however, embodied in the Report.

*MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE agreed that it was that Resolution which was present in his thoughts. He submitted that it was desirable either that the practice of the Assessment Committees should be brought into accord with the law, or that the law should be made to harmonise with the practice. If the Assessment Committees generally were to conform with the law as laid down by the Judges, the results would be very serious for manufacturers at Oldham and elsewhere. At Oldham machinery valued at £200,000, which had hitherto escaped assessment, would be liable to assessment; and, if the law were enforced, it would be a very serious matter for the trade of Oldham, and for all classes there. A very serious burden would be imposed upon the manufacturers, and the result would probably be that many trades, which were already almost profitless, would cease to be carried on. The law in Scotland and Ireland was wholly different from that laid down by the Judges in this country; and many people thought that if the law were strictly enforced here trades carried on at Oldham and other places would be transferred to Scotland, where they would not be subject to rating in respect of movable machinery. He held that, on the whole, the wise course to take in the circumstances would be to bring the law into accord with the practice. This would not affect the Agricultural interest in any way, for mills in Agricultural districts were not assessed now in respect of movable machinery. An hon. Member had asked what would be the effect of this Bill on Gas and Water Companies, and in answer he had to say he believed the effect would be *nil*, because the machinery of these Companies was affixed to the soil, and was not movable machinery in the true sense of the term. In the same way, the effect of the Bill would not, as had been suggested, be to relieve railways from a considerable portion of the burden of rates which they now bore. He believed that railways were treated like other manufacturing concerns, and if other manufacturing concerns were not rated in respect of their movable machinery, so neither were railways. There remained only again the question of the Agricultural interest. He felt persuaded that if this Bill passed into law, it would in no way affect the Agricultural interest whatever. More than that, he held it was important in the Agricultural interest that the principle of not rating movable machinery should be asserted. It was quite possible that in the future of Agriculture it might be necessary to adopt machinery to a greater extent than now. He looked forward himself to considerable advances in that direction. Certainly it was the interest of Agriculture to encourage the growth of manufactures in the rural districts. Anything which would tend to drive those industries out of the rural districts would be a very great injury to Agriculture. He believed it would be a wise thing for all parties to assist in passing this Bill into law; and though he could not promise on the part of the Government to give any special time to the further stages of this Bill, yet, personally, he should do his very best to assist in carrying the measure. He could not but hope that the opportunity would be taken to arrive at some kind of compromise, because it was extremely important to all the interests involved that this matter should be settled on a broad and comprehensive basis.

MR. J. POWELL WILLIAMS (Birmingham, S.) said, he had on previous occasions expressed the opinions which he entertained with regard to the proposals of this Bill, but he wished it to be distinctly understood, if it was not already understood, that he admitted it was a great anomaly that there should be a certain state of the Law as declared by the Courts, and a certain practice on the part of the assessing authorities which in any way differed from that Law, and what the promoters of this Bill maintained was that if the Law were to be put into operation in its strictness, there would be inflicted on manufacturing communities a very serious amount of rates which at the present time they were not called upon to pay. He did not wish to see any change at all in what had hitherto been the practice of the rating authorities, and if, through legal decisions, there had recently been imposed upon them an obligation to depart from the custom they had now pursued for so many years, he did not wish that that obligation should be a legal obligation; but, on the other hand, he should be glad to see them relieved of it. Whilst, however, he did not wish to see any change in that direction, he was also anxious, if he could, to guard the great city, a portion of which he had the honour to represent, from provisions in this or any other Bill which would deprive the rating authority of a considerable source of assessment to which it now had recourse. He listened with great interest to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board, who, he thought, stated the case, as far as he did state it, with perfect fairness. The right hon. Gentleman informed the House that he thought there was no necessity in this Bill to make specific exemptions in regard to gas and water undertakings. But he would remind the right hon. Gentleman that in the case of the Rating of Machinery Bill of 1890 it was thought necessary by the promoters to include a provision specifically exempting from the operation of the measure, waterworks, gasworks, and collieries. The right hon. Gentleman did not speak of collieries, and it would be interesting to know what the opinion of the Government was as to the operation of this Bill in regard to collieries. The President of the Local Government Board did, however, tell them something about railways, saying he did not think that there would be any change as respected the obligation of railway companies to pay rates, owing to the passing of a Bill like this. He (Mr. Powell Williams) had in his hand a document prepared by the Clerk to the Overseers of Birmingham two years ago, in which incidental reference was made to what would probably take place in regard to the great railway works at Crewe in the event of such a Bill passing. This gentleman stated that he had it on reliable authority that the London and North-Western Railway Company would obtain an abatement in rates of probably between £7,000 and £8,000 a year in respect of machinery in their large workshops not fixed to the hereditaments except by their own weight, and for which they would be entitled to exemption. Here they had on one side the right hon. Gentleman, and on the other side the clerk of a great rating authority, and the opinions which they expressed as to the exemptions which railway companies might derive under the Bill were entirely conflicting. If the truth was that the railway companies would get any exemption, that was to say, if the rating which they now bore would be shifted on to other shoulders, to what shoulders would it be shifted? If one class of ratepayers were exempted, another class must necessarily suffer, and in the case of Crewe that class would be the workmen of the railway companies dwelling in small houses, of which, to a great extent Crewe consisted. Those who would suffer if the Bill passed in its present shape would not be the agricultural population, but the small householders and small shopkeepers, and the burden upon those people was already quite as much as it was possible for them to bear. He was aware it was said that compound householders were not affected directly or quickly by any change in rating, but he had heard of a case where, after the passing of the Free Education Act by the last Government, the landlord of a large number of compound houses raised the rents of the houses, alleging that he would have to pay a great deal more in rates. The fact was that he was not called upon to pay a single sixpence more than he had paid before. No doubt this was to some extent an agriculturist's question, but it was quite as much a workmen's question. The way to test the Bill was to ascertain whether or not it would make any change in practice. His hon. Friends said they did not wish there should be any change in practice; what they desired was that the practice which had obtained for many years on the part of the rating authorities should continue, and that that practice should be made legal. Therefore, if he could show that in the operation of this Bill the practice would necessarily be changed to the disadvantage of the small ratepayers, he was, he thought, justified in opposing the Bill, unless he could get some assurance that the promoters would in Committee insert a clause which would protect the places that had adopted a certain practice to which no objection was raised. It had been said that Birmingham in this matter was a law unto itself. The truth was, that Birmingham had done more to carry out the law as it had been recently declared, than probably any other constituency, with, perhaps, the exception of Sunderland. The law, as recently declared, was, that they should go beyond the motive power, to certain machinery which was attached to the motive power, and what was worked by it; and what was said was, that the law had gone much beyond fixed plant worked by the motive power—had, indeed, gone to goods and chattels which were strictly personalty, and which had never come under assessment. But Birmingham, though it had not gone to that extent, had gone somewhere in that direction. Personally, he was in favour of the principle of rating all kinds of personalty; but he thought it was not fair to rate the personalty of a manufacturer whilst they did not rate the personalty of a private owner. He therefore agreed that there should be some change in the law, but he did not think the change should be in the direction suggested by the Bill. To return to the case of Birmingham, perhaps he would be allowed to state the case as it would be developed by the Bill. Mr. Clark, the city valuer, giving evidence before the Select Committee, stated—and his evidence was confirmed by the rating authority—that if this Bill passed in its present form, machinery in Birmingham of the valuation of at least £20,000 would be taken out of assessment. Mr. Clark spoke seven or eight years ago, but the House might take it that the result now would be the same as he then contemplated. As the rates of Birmingham were 6s. 6d. in the £, or, roughly speaking, one-third, there would thus be a loss of rating revenue amounting to between £6,000 and £7,000—that was to say, persons who had been paying that amount would be relieved, and another class of ratepayers would be additionally burdened to that extent. In Birmingham nearly three-fourths of the houses assessed for the Poor Rate were of the compound class, and did not exceed in rent 6s. or 6s. 6d. a week. If this Bill passed, without the Amendment which he would certainly move if the measure got into Committee, the result would be that the compound householders of Birmingham would have to pay a great portion of the £6,000 or £7,000, instead of the manufacturers, who had hitherto paid it. He, therefore, on behalf of the poorer ratepayers in the district to which he belonged, protested against the change which the Bill would make. If, however, he received from the hon. Baronet the Member for North-West Manchester, or from others who were promoting the measure, a promise that in Committee they would regard favourably, and endeavour to get embodied in the Bill, the Amendment which he put on the Paper last year, and which was to the effect that, as regarded machinery and motive power, the rating would be left precisely as at present, he would willingly withdraw his opposition, and, in point of fact, vote for the Second Reading.

MR. G. WHITELEY (Stockport) said, it was to him a matter of regret to recognise the manner in which this important question was approached by various sections of the House. It was not approached from the standpoint as to whether it was right, or fair, or proper, that used machinery in mills should be taxed, or not; it was approached solely from the standpoint as to who was going to bear the burden from which the manufacturing industry would be relieved if the Bill, was passed. The House was, therefore, divided into sections on the question. On one side, opposing the Bill, were the county Members representing real property, and on the other side, supporting the Bill, were the borough Members representing property in mills and factories. The hon. Member for Hampshire, who was a typical agricultural Member, said the Bill meant the transference of a burden of the rates from the shoulders of the manufacturing industry to the shoulders of the agricultural industry. It was only a few evenings ago that the hon. Member moved a Motion in regard to agricultural depression, which he attributed mainly to the heavy burdens which land had to bear; pointing out that whereas real property had to pay 7s. 6d. in the £ in rates and taxes, personal property had only to pay 2s. 6d. in the £. The hon. Member suggested some alteration in this burden of taxation; but he was too good a stratagist to suggest where the money was to be found in order to supply the deficit in case the relief asked for were given to land. It was perfectly well known that if real estate were relieved from either taxation or rating, additional burdens would have to be imposed on personal property; and yet, notwithstanding that undoubted fact, many hon. Members on the Opposition side, who were interested mainly in personal property, voted for the Motion of the hon. Member for Hampshire. He therefore thought that hon. Members representing agricultural constituencies should not decline to meet urban Members in the same spirit of concession, in what after all was a matter of very little importance, by refusing them the very small measure of justice they asked for in the Bill. The hon. Baronet the Member for Somersetshire, referred to the Budget of last year, and pointed out that the Death Duties on real and personal property were equalised and graduated. Well, he voted for the graduation of the Death Duties, and he would have voted for their equalisation had a Division been taken. But he looked upon the Budget as the first step in a comprehensive scheme for the equalisation of taxation on every class of property. Possibly, within the next few months the Conservative Party in Office might be introducing a measure for the equalisation of taxation and rating on land. Was it then worth while for the agricultural Members to refuse to meet urban Members when they sought to relieve themselves to the very small extent proposed by the Bill? The hon. Member for Hampshire said the object of the agricultural Members was to protect themselves; and he asked why should manufacturers seek to relieve themselves from rates they at present bore? But supposing a Bill were to be introduced for the equalisation of all rating and taxing, what would be said of Members representing manufacturing districts if they said, "we want to protect ourselves, and we object to putting any burden on us that would relieve the agricultural industry." That would be taking a very narrow and selfish view of the matter. It was sometimes desirable to throw a sprat in order to catch a whale, and he, therefore, thought that manufacturers should be given this small modicum of justice in view of the large demand that would be made upon their liberality in the near future.

*MR. W. MATHER (Lancashire, S.E., Gorton) was glad to note many indications in the Debate that at last the long campaign in the interest of the Rating of Machinery Bill was about to end in a satisfactory solution of the question. He thought hon. Members representing rural constituencies ought to be assured, after what had fallen from the President of the Local Government Board, that the agricultural industry could not in the slightest degree, directly or indirectly, be affected injuriously by the passing of the Bill. He thought the only class of the community who had any grievance, and therefore who alone were entitled to be heard in the Debate, were certain persons in Birmingham, Sunderland, Gateshead, Newcastle, and other places in the North, whose Assessment Committees had accepted the interpretation of the law according to the last judgment of Lord Esher, and had declared that in future they intended to rate machinery in their respective districts. But those Assessment Committees did not altogether amount to a dozen, while on the other hand there were hundreds of Assessment Committees throughout the country who had not accepted Lord Esher's interpretation of the question. However, persons in those Northern constituencies thus affected were entitled to the consideration of the House; and the speech made on their behalf by the hon. Member for South Birmingham (Mr. Powell Williams) had brought them nearer to a satisfactory solution of the question, if the Bill could only get into Committee. The hon. Member had suggested that the *status quo* should be allowed to continue; that districts should be allowed to rate themselves as now under the method which had been in vogue for 20 years. He did not think it was possible that this voluntary arrangement could be made by the Assessment Committees through the country. What he thought was possible was to examine the Birmingham system, so as to see how far that system could be adopted as the law of the land. In the township of Openshaw, in his own constituency, there was, of the many manufactories, one which had been singled out for special treatment by the Assessment Committee, who had determined in that case to carry out the law as laid down by Lord Esher. The value of the land and buildings was £90,000, and on that an assessment of £900 was made. Then the smallest *minutiæ* of the machinery were assessed, or a total value of £112,000; making the whole assessment £2,020. Formerly only the engines, boilers, and main shafting had been assessed, making the assessable value of the machinery £30,000. This firm had protested against the assessment; but, year after year, they had expected the present Bill to pass, and so they had paid instead of testing the assessment at law. If the law of the land were passed on the Birmingham practice of assessing machinery at 45s. per nominal horse-power, the total assessment of the works he had mentioned would be only £1,450, instead of £2,020.

Mr. J. POWELL WILLIAMS explained that the Birmingham system took account, not only of the motive power, but of the machinery which it worked.

*Mr. MATHER said, that he understood that. The judgment of Lord Esher confined itself to these simple words:—

> "The Court thinks that machinery should be taken into consideration, but how it should be taken into consideration, and to what extent, the Court will not say."

What the Court would not say these Assessment Committees had undertaken to say. Then—to show the monstrosity of the situation—the Openshaw Assessment Committee said that, having established the new principle in respect to this one firm, they would have a re-assessment of all the works in the district, and would deal with them all in the same way. But this they had not done, because they dare not apply to the cotton industry of Lancashire the conditions they had imposed on the ironworks. If they had, there would have been a revolt. Could the House of Commons complacently allow the law to remain in this state? The House of Commons would be exposed to the ridicule of the whole country if it did not at once find a means of removing such gross anomalies. The Assessment Committees in the country would welcome a clear definition of the law as much as the manufacturers. The promoters of this Bill had, year after year, to repeat the same arguments and refute the same wilfully ignorant views. The House had always ratified the Bill by large majorities. He did not say that it would exactly fit the case; but Birmingham had hit upon a plan which might be applied. Birmingham was a city set upon a hill, whose light could not be hidden; and all its Members laid down the law like law-givers. The Assessment Committees were entitled to such assistance from the House of Commons as would enable them to conduct their functions on a rational basis. It was time for the question to be settled for ever. He understood that in Committee the hon. Member for South Birmingham intended to move an Amendment providing that the rating of machinery should be according to the nominal horse-power. As to that device, he should be willing to accept the decision of the House of Commons, for the time being, as the question would have to be compromised to some extent. Would the President of the Local Government Board send out a circular to the Assessment Committees of the country saying that, until the law had been more clearly defined, they were not to impose on manufacturers greater liabilities than they had hitherto been called upon to bear? He hoped that those hon. Members who opposed the Bill on behalf of the agricultural interest would permit it to go forward on the assumption that in Committee the utmost possible consideration would be given to the compromise suggested by the hon. Member for South Birmingham, and thus relieve them from many fears they entertained.

Mr. S. T. EVANS (Glamorganshire, Mid.) said, that the speech of the hon. Member was an admirable one against the Second Reading of the Bill, because he had advocated a compromise on the system of rating in force in Birmingham, which was entirely inconsistent with the system advocated by the Promoters of the Bill. The House was asked to pass the Second Reading in order that the Birmingham system should be considered by a Committee, with the object of seeing whether it could not be adopted throughout the country. This was tantamount to asking whether or not the principle of the Bill should be changed in order to convert it into another measure. This Bill was, indeed, a hardy annual because there was a strong combination of Members, more or less, interested in its favour. He pointed to the important fact that every hon. Member who had spoken in favour of the Second Reading was himself a manufacturer; and this was a circumstance which the House ought to take into consideration. The Bill, however, was opposed by various interests. Up to the present time the opposition to it had proceeded from hon. Members who were more particularly interested in agriculture. He objected entirely to the Second Reading on a very broad ground. The principle of assessing property to the rates throughout the country ought to be uniform. It was a very large subject; it had been considered by a Select Committee, and in their Report they recommended that the whole subject should be dealt with by the Government. He maintained that no case had been made out for the exemption which was claimed on behalf of the manufacturers of the country to have any exceptional treatment with regard to this matter. If the question of assessment for the purpose of levying the rates required to be altered it ought to be looked upon as a whole. It was an accepted principle that the people of the country ought not to be taxed without the authority of Parliament; and if there were to be any alteration in the assessment of property for the levying of payment of local rates, then the question ought to be looked upon as a large one, and ought to be viewed as a whole. It certainly ought not to be dealt with by means of piecemeal Legislation, but rather by means of a large measure brought forward on the responsibility of the Government of the day. The hon. Member for Stockport said that the opponents of the Bill took a very narrow and selfish view of the considerations which ought to affect hon. Members. He did not think that the view he had put forward was a narrow or a selfish view. The narrow or selfish view was the view of the persons who desired an exemption to be made in favour of certain classes. The President of the Local Government Board said that a change had been made in the law. There had been no change in the law; from the time of Elizabeth up to the present time there had been no change whatever with regard to this matter. There was no ruling of cases in the Chard decision. This case declared what the law was; and, from it, it appeared that certain Assessment committees in the country had not been following the law at all. Was that any reason why the law should be changed, because it was a change in the law which the promoters asked the House to make? The hon. Baronet in moving the Second Reading of the Bill said there were two objects in view. The first object was to define the law; but it was only necessary to look at the Bill to see that this was not done. The Bill declared that it was "expedient to amend the law"—not to define the law—in favour of a certain class of manufacturers. The second object of the Bill was the existence of a strong desire to alter the law in order to conform with the law of Scotland and Ireland. He did not know whether that was a good object on which to base the Second Reading, and he did not know whether the hon. Member would carry that principle out in all measures. In many matters, indeed, the system of judicature in Scotland was different from that in England; but he thought that the second object of the hon. Member was as weak as the first. This Bill was, based on one or two fallacious arguments. The promoters possessed one or two phrases which they thought would be useful to them in pressing the Bill on the attention of the House and advocating it in the country. The first was, that if they did not exempt this particular class of machinery from being taken into account, in the assessment of premises where it was used, they would be taxing an industry. The working men, however, did not, he asserted, take that view. The money obtained by the levying of rates must be obtained from some source. The manufacturers wished to be exempt from certain rating; who then was to pay? That was a consideration which had been lost sight of by the Promoters of the Bill. The manufacturerers said: "Relieve us; we do not care where the money comes from, so long as we do not pay it." If, however, the manufacturers were relieved, the burden must necessarily be changed from the shoulders which are better fitted to bear it to the shoulders which were too weak to bear it. If the House exempted large portions of the machinery of manufacturers from being taken into account the rates would have to be obtained from the cottage property. It was well-known that the landlords, immediately they had anything like a pretext for raising the rent of a cottage forthwith raised that rent. He knew a place where a School Board was established a short time ago, and before a rate was made in respect of that School Board the landlords came down on the tenants and raised their rents. On whose shoulders, therefore, was it desired to cast this burden? If the rating of machinery was a tax on industry, and it was considered to be a grand argument in favour of the Second Reading of this Bill, then it was an equally grand argument for the exemption of all machinery from rating; but the Promoters did not propose to exempt all machinery from rating. If a piece of machinery was put down and screwed to the ground they said it must be be assessel; but if, say, in a cotton factory a piece of heavy machinery was put down which did not need to be fixed to the ground, then it was not to be taken into consideration. A colliery with its important plant, which was almost all fixed plant, would not be exempted under the provisions of this Bill, though the machinery of the cotton mill next door, because it did not happen to be fixed to the ground, would not be taken into account for the purposes of assessment. He failed to understand why this principle of different treatment was advocated. Was it contended that personalty should not be rated? The workman's cottage was personal property, and care was taken to assess it immediately the cottage was placed on the land. It was only throwing dust in the eyes of the House of Commons, therefore, to say that they ought not to take into account this machinery because it was personalty. So far from relieving personalty and levying all the rates in respect of realty alone, he thought the law ought to be extended the other way—that was to say, they ought to assess personalty for the purposes of the poor rates. The President of the Local Government Board said he wanted to bring the law into an harmonious state; but the law was already harmonious, and what the right hon. Gentleman wanted to do was to harmonise the practice. The railway companies, who had a keen eye for anything which affected their interest, looked favourably upon the passing of the Bill, or else they would have offered it effective opposition. It was apparent that railway companies would be greatly benefited in respect of certain rates if this Bill became law. The fixtures or machinery that were to be taken into account with reference to assessment were of three kinds. First, there were things that were moveable, such as furniture. Secondly, there were things that were attached to freehold, so as to be some part of it. Thirdly, there were things that were capable of being removed, but were so far attached that it was intended they should remain permanent appendages. They were talking of the rating of machinery, but as a matter of fact, no machinery was rated at all. What was done was to take into account machinery which was there for the purpose of enabling the shell of the building to be used, and which must be included in estimating the real value of the premises to a tenant for manufacturing or industrial purposes. If it were objected that by doing this you were rating industry, you were equally rating it by the rating of fixed plant. No sufficient reason had been alleged for exempting any machinery because it was not affixed to the premises. He desired to protest against a misnomer in the title of the Bill. Machinery was not rated. Anybody would come to the conclusion from the title that this was a Bill which provided for or had to do with the rating of machinery, whereas it was a Bill to exempt machinery from being taken into account. The Bill was said not to be one for the relief of manufacturers; for whose relief then was it brought in? If it did relieve manufacturers, the removed burden must fall upon the shoulders of others, including those who did not participate as they ought to do in the profits of industry, who would have to pay higher rents for their small cottages. They had heard how such rents did go up when additional charges were imposed, or on the mere pretence that they had been. The last Budget produced a wail from the destitute Dukes, who would have to give up a palace that they might keep others; and this Bill was the wail of the poor millionaire manufacturers. If the principle of the Bill were accepted it ought to go before a Select Committee, which could take evidence with regard to its application. A Select Committee had already dealt with the matter, and had reported that it was desirable there should be uniformity practised, and they recommended that the subject should be dealt with comprehensively by the Government with the least possible delay. This was what he desired to see, and not change by piecemeal legislation. They were told that the Committee reported the Bill, and no doubt they did, but he did not read their Report as a recommendation that the Bill should be adopted. They only said that in their opinion it would meet the case of industries depending mainly upon steam for motive power. Why should that case be met specially? The Committee also passed another Resolution, which was that it was desirable rating authorities should not depart from their system of assessment. That Resolution was come to before the Bill was considered Clause by Clause, and it was not embodied in the Report of the Committee. It was said that the Bill had been accepted by the House by large majorities, but the majorities had become smaller from year to year. This year the promoters had not been able to make out a case; and he appealed to the House to say that they would not assist manufacturers to relieve themselves of rates and thereby impose them upon the shoulders of those less able to bear them.

Mr. R. G. C. MOWBRAY (Lancashire, Prestwich) said, he was not a manufacturer, and had not the smallest interest of a personal character in the question, but he represented in the House the opinions, not only of the manufacturers of the constituency, but also those of the working men, who heartily supported the Bill. Further, he was a member of the Select Committee which sat on the subject seven years ago. The most material part of the Report of that Committee was that in which they said, although they expressed no opinion as to whether there had been any variation in the law, or whether it had been altered by the recent decision, the conclusion to which they came was that the system acted upon by valuers in different parts of the country had varied considerably, and the practice to be pursued, in the absence of legislation, would in many cases have a material effect in the future. It was because of the expected material effect in the future it was recommended that the Bill, as amended by the Select Committee, should be proceeded with. He agreed with the Resolution of this Committee as to the necessity for a general reform in our rating law. But this had been waited for now for seven years. It was not a question of one Government or of another. No comprehensive scheme was obtained from the late Government, and there was little prospect of getting one from the present. Those who would be materially affected by the adoption of a system advocated by certain valuers were justified, on behalf of themselves and their workmen, in bringing this question before the House. Those who supported the Bill did not originate the controversy. They were content to allow things to remain as they had been, and to pay the rates they had paid before; but a certain firm of valuers had gone about the country stirring up this question, and seeking to extend the adoption of their system, which had not previously been adopted in the part of the country he represented. An hon. Member had spoken of the case of Openshaw. One of the highest rating authorities in Manchester, that the principle of the recent decision, if it were enforced there, would mean an increase of the rates on the mills of 125 per cent. That was the part against which the promoters of the Bill protested, in the name of the manufacturers and also in the name of the working men. The Secretary for India, when President of the Local Government Board, received a deputation of Trade Unionists representing half a million of men, and their spokesmen repudiated the idea that the Bill was one for the relief of capitalists, and mentioned that in this matter the interests of capital and labour were identical. This was not a manufacturers' Bill, nor a manufacturers' question; but a question of keeping up the great industries which provided employment for the working classes. He asked the House not to reject this Bill, and leave the door open for putting fresh burdens on already depressed industries. He hoped the Government would assist the supporters of the Bill to carry it into law. The cotton industry was not favourably disposed towards them. It felt it had a bone to pick with them which might be picked on another occasion. But in no Party spirit—for, as far as Party went, he wished they would leave this question alone—but in their own interests, and the interests of the district which he represented, he asked for their assistance in favour of the Bill.

*MR. W. H. HOLLAND (Salford, N.) denied the assertion of the hon. Member for Mid Glamorgan, that the majority in favour of the Bill had dwindled year by year. On the occasion, only two years ago, when he introduced the Bill, there went into the Lobby with him a larger number than had ever voted for it before, and the majority was unprecedented. They were asked where, if they removed the burden from the manufacturers, they would place it? They would leave it exactly where it was now, for in the great mass of cases the Bill would make no change. The Bill was said to be a manufacturers' Bill, but when deputations had waited upon the President of the Local Government Board with reference to the Bill, the most effective arguments for it had proceeded from leaders of the operatives. If the burdens on the manufacturing industries of the country were increased, it was absolutely certain the numbers of the unemployed—an urgent question just now—would increase. No industry would be so much affected by this Bill as the great cotton industry of Lancashire and Yorkshire. He did not think the Bill was really hostile to the interests of agricultural constituencies. Among the questions put to a witness from the agricultural districts by the Select Committee who inquired into this matter in 1887, was the following:—

> "(No. 634): Under the Tyne Boiler Case decision, would you feel bound to rate agricultural implements?"

The answer was:—

> "Yes; I do not see how you can avoid it."

So that agriculturists had an interest as well as manufacturers in the definite settlement of this matter.

*MR. W. P. BYLES (York, W.R., Shipley) said, he would have no hesitation in voting for the Bill. An ancient lawgiver laid down a principle of fiscal policy which ought to govern them in this matter: "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn." Machinery did much of the work that oxen did in the time of Moses, and to rate machinery was to muzzle the nineteenth century ox. The hon. Member for Mid Glamorgan (Mr. Samuel T. Evans) said that money not raised by rates must be got somewhere, and asked the supporters of the Bill to indicate the source from which they were to get the money raised by the rating of machinery. In his own judgment rates and taxes should not be imposed where they checked industry or hindered enterprise.

There was a source from which they would be drawn and where the undesirable results which he had just mentioned would not ensue. The unimproved value of land of this country was abundantly able to bear all the burdens of the country, and upon that he would place them.

Mr. J. K. WINGFIELD-DIGBY (Dorset, N.) said, he would reiterate words spoken on a former occasion, and say that this was a Bill to relieve rich manufacturers and capitalists at the expense of poor farmers and labourers, small shopkeepers and householders, because it was evident that if they reduced the amount of property which was to be taxed, heavier taxes would be imposed on other property. The fact that on four or five occasions the Bill had not got beyond its Second Reading showed that it did not form a burning question, and the fact was not so much discreditable to the House as to the Bill itself. If the feeling in favour of the Bill were very strong, the Government would soon be induced to get it passed. With regard to the effect of the Bill on agriculture, the President of the Board of Trade undertook to say that it would do no harm to farmers or labourers. He ventured to say that prophecy would not be fulfilled. During the Debates last Session, on the question of the Death Duties, he thought it was allowed by Members on both sides of the House that, if the Death Duties were to be equalised on realty and personalty, then the rates ought also to be equalised on them. He could not, as an agricultural Member, and as representing an agricultural constituency, consent to support this Bill. He felt that in the face of the proposal to equalise the incidence of the rates on personalty and realty, and in face of the proposal, which he thought a very good one, for one assessment for Imperial and local taxes, it would be a very great mistake if this Bill passed its Second Reading. He wished to remind hon. Members that agriculture was the only industry which was assessed in the Income Tax on the gross and not on the net profits, and the present was the very worst time to put any increased tax upon agriculture. The fact could not be disguised that if machinery were exempted from these rates the burden would fall upon lands and houses, and he hoped, therefore, that the Bill would be opposed, not only by the agricultural Members, but also by those Members who represented large centres of population, who represented the small leaseholder and the artisan who owned his own house.

*Mr. H. MATTHEWS (Birmingham, E.) said, he did not desire to enter into a controversy between one side and another in regard to this question, but to consider how this Bill would affect the law of rating as it now stood. It struck him that there had been a good deal of confusion in the minds of many of those who had addressed the House as to the present state of the law and the change which this Bill would bring about. The law of rating had not altered in the least, at any rate for the last 100 years. According to the law of rating, it was absolutely clear that stock-in-trade and personal property were not rated, but that what was ratable were premises and land in their actual condition of occupation. Then came the question of machinery, about which the difficulty was entirely of fact and not a difficulty of law. If machinery was fixed to the freehold and was part of the freehold, nobody disputed that it was and always had been ratable. If premises were adapted to receive a particular sort of machinery, and if that machinery was essential to the occupation of the premises and was intended to remain so long as they were so occupied, then that machinery, whether fixed or otherwise, was properly taken into account in estimating the ratable value of the premises. There had been no change made in the law in that respect, and he would ask the House whether that was not a reasonable view to take. Would it not be absolutely ridiculous to rate a shipping yard or a cotton mill without the machinery? In such a case they were not rating a shell, a mere inclosure of ground; the machinery was essentially necessary, and was therefore a part of the hereditament. In one of the earliest reported cases on the subject a very learned Judge laid it down that, if a person took over a house containing a billiard table, so long as the table was there and added to the letting value, it would properly be taken into account in the assessment. Was not that common sense? That had been the law for certainly the whole of this century. It was said that the practice was different, and that might be true. He had no doubt that in many places it had happened that Assessment Committees had been induced to leave out of the ratable value of certain manufacturing premises the value of machinery which, according to the principles of the law, ought to be included in the valuation, and it might also be the case that they were now awakening to a sense of their past error.

Mr. W. MATHER said, that nine-tenths of the manufacturers of the country had been rated on the basis that they were not being charged for movable machinery.

*__Mr. MATTHEWS__ said, that in that case nine-tenths of the rates were unfairly charged. He congratulated the manufacturers on their past good luck, but they must not lay any claim to its continuation. Turning to the Bill itself he had no hesitation in saying it altered the law fundamentally and to the advantage of one class of ratepayers only. It altered the law in regard to premises used for trade and manufacturing purposes, and it substituted for the rule he had laid down what he might call the technical rule of fixtures against non-fixtures. Everything which was not so permanently fixed as to be incapable of removal was to be left out of account in estimating the ratable value of the premises. The consequence of that would be that the owner of a large business would only have to arrange that his machinery should not be permanently fixed in order to prevent that machinery being rated. Something had been said about agricultural machinery on a farm, but that was, to a large extent, of a very different character from the machinery of a cotton mill, a shipbuilding yard, or a brewery, for in the latter case it was part of the premises for which rent was paid and would be paid. The Bill would introduce a rule of great difficulty and obscurity, and would probably lead to years of litigation. It introduced a test which was purely arbitrary and altogether novel, and the application of which would lead to increased difficulties and evils. As it seemed to him, therefore, that the existing law was not unjust, and that the alterations in the law proposed by the Bill were unjust and not very rational, he should vote against the Second Reading. He was ready to confess that there were many points in the existing law of rating which demanded change and improvement, but the change now proposed was partial and piecemeal, and in its very nature wrong and unjust. In this matter one class of the community deserved no more sympathy than another; the burden of the rates should be borne equally and fairly by all classes. It was, therefore, because he believed that the changes proposed in the law were unwise and unjust, and because the measure was a partial meddling with a large and complicated subject, that he should vote against the Bill.

*__Mr. ALBERT SPICER__ (Monmouth), said, that as he differed from many of his hon. Friends on the question he could not give a silent vote. He thought it would not be just to relieve manufacturers of the rating in question if the effect of doing so would be to throw the burden on the shoulders of another class. The question was only a small part of a large and important subject—the incidence of taxation—and one phase of it could hardly be dealt with effectively. He held the view that land ought to bear a larger share of taxation than at present and according to its capital value. At the present time a landowner was really punished for improving his land, whilst certain advantages were given to him if he left the land unused or not used to the best advantage. With the views he held on the matter he did not think he would be acting unjustly to his hon. Friends by voting against the Bill, because even if manufacturers were relieved of the rating in question, and the land was made to bear increased rates according to its capital value, the manufacturer would, in consequence, have to pay just as much, for the bulk of manufactories had to be erected where the population was established; and, therefore, on land of comparatively high value. For those reasons he should vote against the Bill, but he hoped that hon. Members interested in the question would not rest until the whole subject of the incidence of taxation was brought forward and considered.

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL (Sir FRANK LOCKWOOD, York) said, he did not agree with the hon. Member for Dorset that there seemed to be an absence of any very strong or considerable feeling on the question among those interested in it. Possibly the hon. Member was misled to that conclusion by the very temperate and proper tone in which the matter had been discussed on both sides. It was not accurate to say that all those who supported the Bill were connected with the manufacturing interest. At any rate, there was a class of the community who were neither manufacturers nor agriculturists, but who were very much interested in maintaining the existing condition of things—he meant the lawyers. He maintained that the existing law in connection with the rating of machinery was grievously uncertain. Hon. Members who represented rural constituencies had contended that if the burden of taxation in question was removed from the manufacturers it would be thrown upon the agricultural classes. But was that the proper way to view the question? What they had to consider was, whether the law in regard to this matter was equal, or just, or certain. And if it could be shown that there was inequality, injustice, or uncertainty in the law relating to the rating of machinery, it was right that an effort should be made to remove the evil. The right hon. Member for East Birmingham had spoken of the certainty of the law on this question, but he spoke of it with all the confidence of one who, fortunately for himself, had been some years removed from private practice. The right hon. Gentleman, in stating his definition of the law, would have them believe that all uncertainty, all question of doubt, was removed from it. The opinion held by the right hon. Gentleman was not held by Lord Esher, who decided the Chard case. In that case it was decided in one breath that machinery should not form the subject of rating, but that it was to be taken into consideration. And when an appeal was made to the Judges as to what were to be the considerations which were to affect the judgment of the rating authority, it was pointed out that these considerations must depend upon the circumstances of each individual case. The result was that Assessment Committees were left to grope blindly in order to ascertain what the law was. The hon. and learned Member for Glamorgan, in his admirable speech, said the law was now the same as it was in the time of Elizabeth. But there was not so much machinery in the time of Elizabeth, and different considerations had arisen as enterprise had introduced machinery into the development of trade. The object of rating, of course, was to impose, if possible, an equal burden upon all; but the policy had always been that care must be taken in fixing the rate not to interfere with the commercial enterprise and the development of the industry—not to muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. The hon. Member for Hampshire expressed a wish that personal property should be rated. The doctrine might be an uncommonly good one for the landlord, but it would be a precious bad one for the tenant, and the hon. Member would not wish to lose sight of either of those parties in this matter. He quite agreed that it would have been most desirable if they could have had a comprehensive measure dealing with the rating question from all points of view. But no Government apparently had had time to take the question up. Now a Bill had been introduced which dealt in a satisfactory manner with inequalities in the law of rating and disposed of the uncertainty which existed in regard to a particular matter. Was it reasonable that they should object to half a loaf because they could not get a whole one? In giving his approval to the Bill he spoke merely in his private capacity. He did not know what the hon. Baronet proposed to do in regard to the future of the measure supposing the Second Reading to be carried, but he should have thought that there was no better tribunal to which it could be referred than the Grand Committee on Trade. A suggestion had been made with regard to a Special Committee; but surely no assembly could be better fitted from all points of view to deal with the *minutiæ* of the measure than the Grand Committee. He therefore suggested that if the Bill were read a second time, this would be an admirable mode of dealing with it in the Committee stage.

The House divided.—Ayes 185; Noes 134.—(Division List No. 9.)

Motion made, "That this Bill be referred to the Grand Committee on Trade."—(*Sir W. H. Houldsworth.*)

SIR R. H. PAGET moved, as an Amendment, that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee. He had had experience of both Committees, and there could be no doubt that if the Bill was to be put into shape, the Select Committee was best fitted to do the work.

MR. S. T. EVANS supported the Amendment, and pointed out that the majority was the smallest that had ever been given in favour of the Bill. The more the House saw of the Bill the less they liked it. The Select Committee was best suited to the sifting of the question because evidence could be taken, whereas no evidence could be produced before a Grand Committee. Besides, as he was once told by the late Mr. W. H. Smith, only Government Bills were sent to Grand Committees. The strongest reason, however, for sending the Bill to a Select Committee was, as he had said, that evidence could be taken there; and he thought that more evidence ought to be taken before they proceeded to deal with the question in a piecemeal fashion. The chief promoters of the Bill, he thought, admitted that there was a great deal to be said in favour of the adoption of the Birmingham principle, but if that were applied the whole character of the Bill would be changed. If they referred the Bill to a Select Committee, they could take the evidence of Birmingham experts. If this Bill went to a Select Committee, there would be ample opportunity of taking the evidence of experts on the subject; and, looking at the matter from any point of view, he ventured to think that no real ground could be adduced for sending the Bill to the Grand Committee on Trade.

*Sir A. K. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) pointed out that, though the majority that day had not been as large as former majorities, the Bill had been a long time before the House, and the majority that day was certainly a decisive one. The only advantage he could see in a Select Committee would be that of the power of calling witnesses. The Measure was perfectly well known to the House, and, although the law on the point might be uncertain, it could be dealt with perfectly well before the Grand Committee. The hon. Member for Glamorgan contended that it never was intended that private Members' Bills should be referred to Grand Committees; but there could be no objection in principle or practice to such a course being taken, for several Private Members' Bills, *e.g.* his own Bankruptcy Act of 1890, had been so dealt with, and every Amendment could be laid before the Grand Committee. The Amendment of the hon. Member was simply dilatory, and intended to prevent the Bill from passing. Until they were wise enough to carry on a Bill like this from Session to Session, they should hesitate to accept a proposal which would seriously interfere with the passing of the Bill.

Mr. J. POWELL WILLIAMS thought that the Bill should go to a Select Committee. The hon. Member who had just sat down asserted that the Bill had been a very long time before the House. It was true that this Bill was the same Bill as that presented last year, but it was a totally different Bill from previous Bills. For instance, the Bill of 1883 contained a clause having reference to waterworks, gasworks, and collieries; this Bill contained no such clause, and that in itself was a most important point. Before such a point as that could be determined, evidence would have to be taken from those interested in gasworks, waterworks, and collieries as to the nature of the undertaking they carried on. Moreover, there had been a dispute between the two Front Benches as to the law on the subject. A learned Gentleman on the Front Opposition Bench contended that it was clear and did not need elucidation, and the Solicitor General said the reverse. It seemed to him that that was another argument for sending the Bill to a Select Committee.

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE said, that the object of the hon. Member for Mid Glamorgan was to re-open the question of the principle of the Bill. He ventured to point out that there never had been a Bill before the House, the principle of which had been fought out in Committee. The hon. Member for Mid Glamorgan complained that the majority was not large enough, but it was equivalent to a majority of 100 in a full House.

Mr. S. T. EVANS: I said it grew smaller every year.

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE said, the numbers voting on both sides this year were smaller than before, but the majority obtained was, as he had said, equivalent to 100 in a full House, and surely that was sufficient to carry the principle of the Bill. He hoped the House would send the Bill to the Grand Committee.

Mr. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet), pointed out that Grand Committees were constituted on Party lines, and this was by no means a Party question. All sections of the House were in hopeless confusion as to the law on the subject, and that was one of the reasons why the House itself should desire to retain the ultimate control of the details of the Bill. He did not think that a Grand Committee was such a tribunal as could efficiently discharge work of this kind.

The House divided:—Ayes, 139: Noes, 175.—(Division List No. 9.)

Bill referred to the Standing Committee on Trade.

LODGER FRANCHISE BILL.

*Mr. H. W. PAUL (Edinburgh, South) moved the Second Reading of this Bill. He said that it was simply a repealing measure. It proposed to repeal certain words in existing Statutes, and the effect would be to assimilate the Lodger and Occupation Franchises. A vote would thus be given, not only to every lodger whose lodging was worth £10 a year unfurnished, but to all lodgers. He would not attempt to give a legal definition of the terms "lodger" and "occupier," but he would give a popular definition. A lodger was an occupier whose landlord lived on the premises, and an occupier was a lodger whose landlord lived somewhere else. Surely the fitness of a man to exercise the Franchise could not depend upon the place where his landlord resided. No notice of opposition to this Bill appeared upon the Paper, and therefore he hoped that it would receive unanimous assent. In the autumn of last year, the National Union of Conservative Associations in Edinburgh passed a Resolution to the effect that the qualification for a lodger should be the payment of 4s. a week. The result of adopting that Resolution would be to admit five-sixths of the lodgers who were now excluded from the Franchise, and all of whom he desired to admit. The effect of the existing law was to exclude, in many places, every working man who happened to be a lodger; in other words, every working man who did not happen to be married. That was a state of things which no one could desire to continue. He proposed this change in the interests of both political Parties. He concluded by moving that the Bill be read a second time.

Mr. W. AMBROSE (Middlesex, Harrow) said, he could not agree with the hon. Member's definition of a lodger. He objected to the form in which the hon. Member proposed this fresh legislation. It was the worst form that could be adopted, the Bill containing all sorts of confusing references to several Statutes, each one of which must be studied in order to understand what the Bill would do. In the Schedule five different Acts of Parliament were referred to, and the proposal was to repeal particular sections of those measures. The effect would be to embarrass all those who were concerned with elections. But he not only objected to the Bill because it was piecemeal legislation. He also opposed it because it was an attempt to jerrymander the Constitution just before an appeal to the country. The Bill was nothing less than an impropriety.

It being Half-past Five o'clock, the Debate stood adjourned.

SEED POTATOES SUPPLY (IRELAND) BILL. [No. 117.]

Bill considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Colonel C. E. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) moved to report Progress.

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. J. Morley, Newcastle-upon-Tyne) appealed to the hon. Member not to persist in his objection, as this Bill had the approval of his own Leader and of all parties in the House.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) also hoped the hon. Member would not press his objection, but at the same time he could not help saying that if this Bill were delayed the hon. Member for Mid Cork (Dr. Tanner) would be mainly responsible. He regretted exceedingly that the hon. Member should have thrown the element of obstruction on the floor of the House when the House might be engaged on a Bill which was absolutely non-contentious.

Dr. C. K. TANNER (Mid Cork) said, he was accustomed to Tory jeers and taunts, but again and again Irish measures, simply because they were Irish measures, had been opposed by hon. Gentlemen sitting above the Gangway on the Opposition side. The simple reason why he had objected to Bills on the Order Paper this day was because they were contentious, but the Seed-Potatoes Bill, though entirely non-contentious, was opposed by "noodles." ["Order, order!"]

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT said, he should be glad if he could respond to the appeal of the right hon. Gentleman, but after the objection that had been taken to Bills affecting large masses of the industrial classes by the hon. Member for Mid Cork, he was bound to protest against the present Bill being proceeded with.

Committee report Progress; to sit again To-morrow.

SEED-POTATOES SUPPLY (IRELAND) [REMUNERATION] BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved,—That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of remuneration to any Inspectors that may be appointed under any Act of the present Session to provide for the Supply of Seed Potatoes to Occupiers and Cultivators of Land in Ireland.

Resolution to be reported To-morrow.

MOTIONS.

RULE OF THE ROAD AT SEA.

Motion made—

"That a Select Committee be appointed to consider the objections which have been raised to the adoption by Order in Council of Rule 15 of the revised International Regulations for preventing collisions at sea, dealing with sound signals in fog, as suggested by the Washington Conference, and considered by the maritime Powers.—*(Sir Donald Currie.)*

Dr. C. E. Tanner.

MR. R. W. HANBURY (Preston) hoped the hon. Member would consent to postpone his Motion, as his hon. Friend the Member for Lynn Regis (Mr. T. Gibson Bowles), who was unable to be present, had a very important Amendment to extend the scope of the reference.

MR. H. S. FOSTER (Suffolk, Lowestoft) also hoped the reference would be so extended as not only to deal with fog signals, but night signals at sea generally.

***SIR DONALD CURRIE** (Perthshire, W.) appealed to the hon. Member for Preston to withdraw his objection, as it was very important that this Committee should be appointed as soon as possible.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. BRYCE, Aberdeen, S.) joined in the appeal, observing that it was extremely desirable that the Inquiry should proceed at the earliest possible moment.

MR. R. W. HANBURY insisted on his objection.

Motion accordingly postponed.

MUNICIPAL SUPERANNUATION BILL.

On Motion of Sir A. K. Rollit, Bill to enable Municipal Corporations to provide for Superannuation Funds for their Officers and Persons in their Service.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time on Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 134.]

SUMMARY JURISDICTION (MARRIED WOMEN) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. E. W. Byrne, Bill to amend the Law relating to the Summary Jurisdiction of Magistrates in Reference to Married Women.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time on Wednesday 22nd May, and to be printed. [Bill 135.]

LEASEHOLDS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. T. H. Bolton, Bill to amend the Law relating to Leaseholds.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time on Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 136.]

House adjourned at a Quarter before Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 21st February 1895.

AUSTRALIAN COLONIES CUSTOMS DUTIES BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to amend the law with respect to Customs Duties in the Australian Colonies — Presented by the Marquess of Ripon ; read 1ª ; to be printed ; and to be read 2ª on Thursday next. (No. 20.)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1894, AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 15.)

Read 3ª (according to Order), and passed.

POLICE PROTECTION AT MONOMOLIN.

LORD **MUSKERRY** asked whether it was true that the Police Barrack at Monomolin, in the Oulart district, had been lately removed; whether it was erected to give protection to men who had taken boycotted farms ; whether five farms in the immediate neighbourhood of the Barrack were still boycotted; and how near would be the nearest Police Barrack to Tomkin's farm, which was boycotted, on removal of the Monomolin Barrack? He said that he was informed that the Police Barrack at Monomolin was established in consequence of the occurrence of a serious outrage and on the recommendation of the local Bench ; that farms in the neighbourhood were occupied by men whom the National League described as "grabbers," and that the League of the district held meetings every fortnight, when the occupants of the farms were denounced in the usual terms. A crime might not be perpetrated in the district whilst the present Government remained in power, because the National League were their very good friends. But that crime would be committed sooner or later was almost certain, and should it occur when the present Government had relinquished office their successors must not be held responsible. The responsibility must rest upon those who had rendered crime possible by removing the Barrack. The local Magistrates had passed a Resolution recently, expressing regret at the removal of the Barrack, and he understood that their regret was shared both by the Protestant Rector and the Parish Priest.

LORD **RIBBLESDALE** said that it was true that the Police Barrack had been recently removed. It was also true that the police hut was erected to afford protection to men who had taken boycotted farms. There was, however, no boycotting in the district now, and, as far as those whom he represented knew, five farms were not boycotted. The nearest Police Barrack to Tomkin's farm was four miles distant, and there were two others within a distance of five miles. The police hut was erected in circumstances which no longer existed, and the reason for its discontinuance was the removal of the extra police force, which was justified by the quiet state of the county, and which had received the Assent of Her Majesty's Lieutenant for the County. It was considered by the Government that the Police in the Barracks to which he had referred would discharge adequately the services that might be required of them in respect of Tomkin's farm. The removal of the particular police hut mentioned in the question would result in a saving to the cesspayers of £140 per annum.

LORD **ASHBOURNE** observed that it was no doubt a good thing to effect a saving, but that it was a serious matter to intrust the protection of a farm to police quartered five miles away. The noble Lord had not attempted to give any explanation with regard to the statement of the Magistrates that the removal of the hut was an unwise and rash step to take.

House adjourned at Twenty-five minutes before Five o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, 21st February 1895.

The House met at Three of the clock.

QUESTIONS.

LIFE-SAVING APPARATUS.

MR. **H. C. F. LUTTRELL** (Devon, Tavistock) : I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the Board of Trade will allow the life-saving apparatus to be issued to those coastguard stations which are at present unprovided with this apparatus?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. BRYCE, Aberdeen, S.): Life-saving apparatus has been supplied to all coastguard stations where the Board of Trade are advised that it is likely to be required for the purpose of saving life. I cannot undertake to provide it at other places without previous consideration of the special circumstances; but if my hon. Friend is of opinion that any portion of the coast specially known to him is insufficiently provided, and will communicate with me, I will have the matter carefully looked into.

MR. LUTTRELL: I beg to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty whether the Admiralty would be willing to accept from the Board of Trade the life-saving apparatus at those coastguard stations which are at present unprovided with the apparatus?

THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. E. ROBERTSON, Dundee): No objection would be raised by the Admiralty if the Board of Trade consider that life-saving apparatus should be placed at any coastguard station not already supplied with the apparatus.

THE ROYAL PATRIOTIC FUND.

MR. H. E. KEARLEY (Devonport): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the Government intend granting the Motion for a Select Committee to inquire into the administration and financial position of the several funds controlled by the Commissioners of the Royal Patriotic Fund:

***THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR** (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling Burghs): Yes, Sir.

THE LAND PURCHASE ACTS.

MR. J. HAMMOND (Carlow): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, if his attention has been drawn to the case of a tenant named John Kealy, who was evicted from a farm on the Westenra estate in County Carlow some years ago, whose landlord purported to sell the farm, under the Purchase Acts, to a person named Colclough, for £3,000; is he aware that the Land Commission refused to sanction an advance to this person, on the ground of insufficient security; that now another alleged purchaser, named William Haskins, has come forward to buy the farm, notwitstanding the former agreement for sale between the landlord and Colclough; and that Haskins offered to lodge £570 to induce the Land Commission to give the landlord £3,000 for the farm; is it the intention of the Treasury to allow the money of the taxpayers to be spent upon arrangements which are not made with any *bona fide* occupying tenant, to be perfected; and, will the Land Commission advance £3,000 for the evicted farm?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): The estate referred to is for sale in the Land Judges Court. On the 26th October, 1893, an undertaking was received from John Colclough, to the effect that in case the Land Commission bought the holding referred to in the question, he would purchase the same under the Land Purchase Acts for the sum of £3,570, of which he proposed to pay £570 in cash, and applied for an advance of £3,000. The agreement set forth that the application was made by him as tenant from year to year under an agreement dated the 14th of February 1891, at a rent of £210. As an advance of £4,000 had already been made to Mr. Colclough in the year 1891 for the purchase of other lands, in the Queen's County, upon another estate, and having regard to the provisions of the Statutes, the application by Mr. Colclough to the Land Commission for an advance could not be entertained. I am informed it is not the case as stated in the question that the application was refused on the ground that the security was not considered sufficient. Subsequently, on the 4th July, 1894, an application in similar terms was received from William Haskins. It appeared from the rental settled in the Land Judge's Court, that W. Haskins had been accepted as the tenant in the place of the said John Colclough, Colclough having by a deed dated the 23rd of June in the same year assigned the holding to Mr. Haskins subject to the rent thereof, in consideration of a sum of £546. 8s. paid by Haskins to him. The holding was then, and not previously, inspected in the usual course, and the security being considered sufficient the Land

Commission on the 11th February 1895, made an order sanctioning the advance of £3,000 which has since been made. The sum of £570, part of the price, has been paid by Haskins into the Land Judge's Court, and the usual guarantee deposit has been retained by the Land Commissioners.

THE EXECUTION OF JOHN TWISS.

MR. W. H. K. REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will order an inquiry into the charges made against certain officials in Ireland by John Twiss, who was recently executed in Cork Prison.

MR. J. MORLEY: The charges made by the convict Twiss were confined to imputations made against District Inspector Irwin. They were made at the trial in the hearing of the Chief Baron, who subsequently said, in sentencing Twiss, that he agreed in the conclusion at which the jury had arrived. The officials, including the Governor and Deputy Governor of the prison, wholly repudiate charges which rest solely on the uncorroborated imputations of the convict. No ground whatever exists for ordering an inquiry.

MR. W. REDMOND: Might I ask whether, in view of the very widespread feeling in regard to this matter, it would not be satisfactory to have an inquiry into these charges, so that they could be officially proved or disproved once for all, and so set the public mind at rest over this matter?

MR. J. MORLEY: My own very deliberate opinion is, that the public mind will very soon set itself at rest on the question; but, however that may be, I do not consider the existence of an unjust and ungrounded feeling in the public mind as any reason why I should make an inquiry.

MR. W. REDMOND said, the right hon. Gentleman's reply would not be received with satisfaction.

THE DISTRESS IN COUNTY CLARE.

MR. W. REDMOND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he will consider the desirability of recommencing the work of drainage in the Scariff District in Clare, as a reproductive means of giving work to the unemployed in that county.

MR. J. MORLEY: This is the first of 16 questions which are addressed to to me on this subject of relieving works in connection with the partial failure of the potato crop. I do not in the least complain of these questions, but I would ask hon. Members from Ireland to bear in mind that the duty of examining into the condition of distress is carried out by the same Department by which that duty was performed on the last occasion, when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Manchester was Chief Secretary, and the same Inspectors are in charge of the work. The potato failure was very much more severe in 1890 and more general. It is not intended that these works should afford employment to labourers in towns; that has never been the practice on these occasions. The labourers in towns are relieved under the ordinary Poor Law, and the relief that we contemplate is relief of landowners and small land holders only. In answer to the hon. Member's question, I would say that no reports have reached the Local Government Board as to the existence of acute distress in the Scariff Union. On the other hand, the Board point out that the Guardians refused to avail themselves of the seed potatoes supply, stating that they believed the potato crop in the Union was generally very good. The relieving officers have not reported that there is any unusual destitution, and the relief statistics do not show that there has been any marked increase in the number of applications for relief.

MR. W. REDMOND: Am I to take the right hon. Gentleman's reply as a statement that the drainage works will not be re-opened? Is he aware of the fact that, within the Scariff River Drainage District, the occupiers are willing to enter into any agreement which may be thought necessary to pay the drainage charge on the improved lands; and whether, apart from the distress, in regard to which I cannot agree with him, these works are not of a most useful and reproductive character, and would not, if re-opened, be of the greatest possible advantage in giving employment, not to labourers in the towns, but to the people all through the country district?

MR. J. MORLEY: I do not know enough of the particulars to answer the hon. Member. No Government can do everything.

LEGAL EXPENSES AT COURTS MARTIAL.

MR. R. W. HANBURY (Preston): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, with a view to reducing the expenses of prisoners on trial before Courts Martial, a solicitor will in future be allowed the same right of audience as a barrister, and according to the same rules of procedure?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: This has been provided for in Rule of Procedure 92B, which was promulgated with the Army Order 105 of July last.

THE PAYMENT OF PENSIONERS.

MR. HANBURY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, whether he can make arrangements that reserve men and pensioners shall receive their pay or pension at the nearest village or other Post Office, and thus be spared the necessity of going to the nearest town, often at some considerable distance, and of thereby losing a day's work?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said, a pensioner or reservist can have the money due to him made payable at any money order office he may select, but the Post Office cannot be expected to make payments at offices which are not money order offices. If a man does not desire to go to a money order office, there is very little doubt that, if known in his village, he could readily get his order cashed by a tradesman. I must add that no complaints have been received as regards this point in the question of payment.

MR. HANBURY: There is no place where they can get these orders cashed; and the result is, that they have to go some miles to the various towns. Cannot that be avoided?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: It is not always necessary for tradesmen to cash the orders. People in the position of my hon. Friend, for instance, can cash the orders. It is not the affair of the War Office, but of the Post Office. We cannot, however, expect the Post Office to pay money at offices where they have no money order departments.

MR. HANBURY: All over my portion of North Staffordshire there are a number of villages where it cannot be done, and I would ask if the matter should not be taken into serious consideration.

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I have already stated that no complaints have been received on the subject.

EDUCATION INSPECTORS.

MAJOR L. DARWIN (Staffordshire, Lichfield): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether Inspectors of Drawing in elementary schools holding temporary appointments have been told that their employment will cease in August next; and, if so, whether (especially in the case of compulsorily retired officers, who have therefore previously been removed from the Government service through no fault of their own) he will reconsider the case of those who have done their duty to the complete satisfaction of the Department for some years, and retain their services until an age limit is reached?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. A. H. D. ACLAND, York, W. R., Rotherham): The employment of some of the local Inspectors will cease in August next, and of others in August 1896. All of these officers who were under 45 years of age have, with one or two exceptions, been offered, or are to be offered, permanent appointments on the new staff; but I fear it is not possible to hold out hopes of retaining any over that age. The Department has expressed its thanks for the services which have been rendered by the gentlemen mentioned, but as the appointments were always clearly understood to be only from year to year, I hope that no injustice has been done.

PARISH MEETINGS.

MAJOR DARWIN: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether, in view of the fact that the parish meeting is to consist of the parochial electors and no others, the Chairman of a Parish Council, who is not a parochial elector, can attend a parish meeting convened for any purpose; and, if he can attend, whether he will be, under Section 45 of the Local Government Act of 1894, the Chairman of that meeting?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central): The Law Officers of the Crown have advised that the Chairman of a Parish Council who is not a parochial elector of the parish is not entitled to be present at the parish meeting, or to be Chairman of the meeting.

THE RECENT FROST AND THE WATER SUPPLY.

MR. J. CUMMING MACDONA (Southwark, Rotherhithe): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board, whether he is aware that the mains of the Southwark and Vauxhall Waterworks Company, serving Barnes and other populous districts, are frozen up through their not having been placed deep enough in the ground, and other precautions being taken to prevent their being frozen; that on this account a very large population is most seriously inconvenienced, having to buy water supplied from local wells, &c., at 3d. per bucket; and that great apprehension exists as to the greater risk the inhabitants incur from loss of life and property from fire; whether the Southwark and Vauxhall Waterworks Company can charge the inhabitants for water which they fail to supply; and will he cause inquiry to be made into the matter, and rectify this condition of things?

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE: I have communicated with the Company, and am informed that, owing to the recent severe frost, some of the mains of the Company in the parish of Barnes are frozen, although they are laid at a greater depth than that generally accepted as sufficient. The Company state that they are employing upwards of 50 water vans. from which a supply is being delivered without charge, and that they have also fixed stand-pipes at all points where the main supply is available, It is added that more than 2,000 stand-pipes are now in use.

COTTAGES AT AUGHEYGALT.

MR. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether the Local Government Board intend to insist on the erection of the cottages at Augheygalt, recommended several months ago by the Inspector; and what is the reason of the delay up to the present.

MR. J. MORLEY: The Board's Inspector is at present engaged in preparing a scheme for the erection of three houses in this district. He is endeavouring to obtain a plot of ground for the purpose by agreement, if possible, so as to avoid the comparatively heavy expense of putting in force compulsory powers of purchase. The Board assure me that the matter will be proceeded with without unnecessary delay.

DISTRESS IN THE SWILLY VALLEY.

MR. A. O'CONNOR: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Local Government Board have had their attention directed to the condition of the people in the mountainous portion of East Donegal between the upper waters of the Swilly and the Finn; and whether any, and what, investigation into that condition was made, and with what result; also whether the right hon. Gentleman had received a Memorial from the people of Glenswilly praying for the construction of a light railway from Letterkenny to Gweedore; and whether the Government contemplate either this or any other means of affording employment in the valley of the Swilly to relieve the distress?

MR. J. MORLEY: With regard to this question and the next, which also stands in the name of my hon. and learned Friend, in consequence of the representations made by him towards the end of January, I called for a special report from the Local Government Board's Inspector as to the actual and prospective condition of the small landholders in the district referred to. The Inspector accordingly visited the district, and in his report, which has been brought to my notice within the last few days, states that in portions of the electoral divisions of Lettermore and Meencarragh, the people have sustained a serious loss owing to the failure of their potato crop. The young men in the district emigrate to England and Scotland in the Spring, and the Inspector believes that very few able-bodied men could be found who would accept employment upon relief works at the rate of payment which the Government have decided to give. The Inspector consulted the Roman Catholic clergyman and the relieving officer upon this point and they both shared this opinion with him. There is no case of outdoor relief from either of these electoral divisions. The information before me does not lead to the conclusion that exceptional measures are, at present, required to meet any distress in the district; but the condition of the people will continue to receive careful attention, and any change in the circumstances of the people will be at once notified to Government.

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1894.

*Sir C. W. DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if he will state how many Councils of Municipal Boroughs (including County Boroughs), Councils of Urban Districts, Boards of Guardians, and other Representative Bodies, have applied to the Local Government Board for an Order under Section 33, Sub-section 1, of the Local Government Act, 1894, to confer on them all or any of the powers therein named, and on what date such Orders will be issued?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: Since the Local Authorites, elected under the Local Government Act, 1894, came into office the Local Government Board have received about 550 applications for Orders under Subsection (1) of Section 33 of the Act. So far as these applications relate to the power to appoint Overseers, the Board are now in communication with the Local Authorities concerned with a view to the issue of Orders on the subject before the 25th of March next. So far as they relate to other matters, they will be dealt with as early as practicable after that date.

THE PURFLEET ORDNANCE STORE.

Major RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will consider the dress of the Ordnance Store labourers at Purfleet, which is complained of as insufficient, particularly as regards their slippers, in which they have to work both inside and outside the magazines; and whether he will equalise the rate of wages between Purfleet and Woolwich, the one being 18s. and the other 19s. 6d., both sets of men doing the same work?

*Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: No complaints have been received as to any insufficiency of the Magazine clothing at Purfleet. As was fully explained in this House on the 30th November, 1893, the rate of 19s. 6d. a week at Woolwich is given in recognition of the relatively high cost of living there. The minimum rate at Purfleet was, in 1893, increased from 16s. 6d. to 18s. a week.

DISTRESS IN THE ARRAN ISLANDS.

Mr. D. SHEEHY (Galway, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he has received reports from the Arran Islands, conveying that most acute distress prevails amongst the inhabitants; whether he is aware that there are 50 evictions at present pending; and, whether any public works are being started in the Islands; if so, how soon are they to be begun?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The Local Government Board Inspector visited the Arran Islands when the potatoes were being dug out, and he reports that the crop was well up to the average, and that he heard no complaints. There are, of course, a number of people on the South Island and in the village of Killeaney, in the North Island, who are in poor circumstances at the best of times; but the Board believe that so far nothing has occurred to intensify the poverty, or to render it necessary to open relief works. I may add that the Clifden Guardians proposed to procure a supply of seed potatoes from the Island this year, and this would appear to show that the potato crop is not believed to have been a bad one. I am informed that ejectment decrees were obtained against 47 tenants on the Islands at Galway Quarter Sessions last October, and that notices under the Land Law Act were posted on the 5th ultimo.

VOLUNTEER REGIMENTAL CANTEENS.

Mr. W. E. M. TOMLINSON (Preston): I beg to ask the Secretary for War, whether his attention has been called to a case which has recently come before the Magistrates at Lancaster, in which the legality of the Regimental Canteen of the 1st Volunteer Battalion Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, at the brigade camp formed at Scale Hall, Lancaster, in August last, has been questioned; and, whether he will consider the propriety of inserting in the Army Bill of the present year a Clause declaring the right of Volunteer Battalions to establish Regimental Canteens when in camp, and prescribing the conditions under which they may be carried on.

*Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: This case being still *sub judice*, I would prefer not to answer this question at present.

RELIEF WORKS IN IRELAND.

Mr. P. A. M'HUGH (Leitrim, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he is aware that a Congested Districts Committee, consisting of members of all creeds and classes in the district, has been formed in North Leitrim; has he received a series of resolutions, adopted at a meeting of that Committee on 25th Janury last, suggesting relief works of a practical nature and likely to prove permanently beneficial; have any of the suggestions of the Committee been adopted by the Irish Government; and will all the recommendations of the Committee receive immediate attention with the view of providing employment wherever it may be urgently needed in North Leitrim?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I understand that the resolutions were received by the Congested Districts Board, and will be considered at their next meeting. On the general subject, however, of the necessity of starting Relief Works in North Leitrim, I am afraid I cannot add anything to my reply to the hon. Member's previous question of the 12th inst.

Mr. P. A. M'HUGH: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he has observed that the Manorhamilton Board of Guardians, at their meeting on Thursday last, unanimously adopted a resolution calling on the Government to start Relief Works in the Union, with a view of saving from starvation small farmers and their families who cannot be given outdoor relief from the rates, and who are completely destitute owing to the failure of the potato crop; and will he give orders to have the resolution of the Guardians carried into effect?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I have seen the resolution referred to in the question. The Local Government Board inform me that the Manorhamilton Union is well circumstanced financially, and that the numbers on relief are less than at the corresponding period of last year. The condition of the people does not appear to render the opening of Relief Works necessary at present, but if the Guardians desire to be allowed to relax the restrictions in the granting of outdoor relief in order to meet sporadic cases of distress, they will be empowered to do so.

Mr. P. A. M'HUGH: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has yet received the Report of the Local Government Board Inspector on the condition of Ballinaglera, County Leitrim; and what steps, if any, have been taken to meet the distress prevailing in that parish?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I have been furnished with a copy of the Report made by the Board's Inspector on the condition of the people in this district. It would appear from the Report that although the people in portions of the district are in somewhat straitened circumstances owing to the partial failure of the potato crop, there is not at present acute distress in the locality, and that the resources of the Poor Law in this Union, which is well circumstanced financially, will be able to deal with any distress likely to arise in the spring.

H.M.S. "NORTHAMPTON."

Mr. J. MAINS (Donegal, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether H.M.S. *Northampton* when she visited Moville in the beginning of this winter had her full number of boys on board; and, whether during her next cruise she will visit Lough Foyle prior to her getting her full complement of boys, so that an opportunity will be given to the able-bodied youth there of joining the Navy?

Mr. E. ROBERTSON: When the *Northampton* visited Moville in November last she had two vacancies for which three candidates offered themselves, two of whom were medically unfit; the third changed his mind. An endeavour is made to have vacancies in the complement when the various ports are visited, but it is not possible to insure this in all cases. Names of applicants are, however, noted in the ship, and they are sent for in their turn to fill vacancies that occur.

*MR. W. JOHNSTON asked the hon. Member whether he would further consider the matter in order that a number of boys from Derry might join the Navy.

MACKEREL CURING.

MR. J. C. FLYNN (Cork, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether any report has been received by the Irish Government from the Scotch Fishery Board on the question of the Crown Brand for cured fish; and, if so, whether he will state the nature of it; whether any overtures have been made by the Irish Fishery Inspectors in regard to the appointment of an inspector for branding purposes; and, if such appointment is to be made, whether these traders, who are practically acquainted with the mackerel curing industry, will be consulted with a view to the selection of a practical competent man.

MR. J. MORLEY: The Irish Government consulted the Scotch Fishery Board on certain points connected with the consideration of the question of establishing a Government brand in Ireland for cured mackerel. The nature of the reply from that Board is generally in favour of a brand. No overtures have been made by the Inspectors of Irish Fisheries in regard to the appointment of an inspector for branding purposes. As regards the third paragraph, I have already stated that there is no intention of adding to the number of Fishery Inspectors. If at any time the necessary legislation should be introduced by Government to enable a brand to be applied, there would doubtless be some subordinate officers appointed, but any consideration of the appointments would now be altogether premature.

MR. FLYNN: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the memorial presented by the Cork and Kerry Mackerel Curers' Association stated that not one of the present fishery inspectors was acquainted with the mackerel curing industry?

MR. J. MORLEY: The question has been considered, not merely by the fishery inspectors, but by the Irish Government, apart from the inspectors.

UNITED STATES TARIFF.

MR. J. C. FLYNN: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the United States has an important herring fishery as well as a mackerel fishery; and, if so, whether the Foreign Office would use its good offices with the Government of that country with a view to reducing the Import Duty on cured mackerel to an equality with that on cured herring?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): As I stated the other day, the United States Government have arranged these Duties to suit their view of their own interests, and no good result could be obtained by making any representation to them.

MR. FLYNN: Are we to understand that a Public Department takes no interest in an important Irish industry of this kind, and will not even make a representation on the matter?

*SIR E. GREY said, the Government had no ground on which to make a representation. The only ground would be the interests of the United States themselves.

MR. FLYNN said that was the ground on which he desired to ask a question. The hon. Baronet stated the other day that the United States Government, having a mackerel fishery of their own, differentiated against mackerel that was imported. They had, however, a herring fishery also, although the duty on imported herrings was much less than on imported mackerel. Would it not, therefore, be possible to make a representation in favour of reducing the duty on mackerel?

*SIR E. GREY said the United States Government made the difference in the Duties to suit their interests, of which they themselves were the only judges. Therefore, he was unable to make any representation to them on the matter.

BOAT SLIP AT TRAFRASK.

MR. J. GILHOOLY (Cork County, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state when the construction of the boat slip at Trafrask will be recommended?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Congested Districts Board are only awaiting the consent of the Trustees of the Bantry Estate before recommending work on this boat slip. It is expected the necessary consent will very shortly be given.

THE GLENVAR FISHERMEN.

MR. J. MAINS: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland—(1) whether he is aware that the fishermen of Glenvar, County Donegal, lost all their boats and fishing gear by the hurricane of the 22nd December last, and in consequence of this have now no means of making a living for themselves and their families; that their condition is rendered still more severe and harassing for the reason that the distress so prevalent throughout Ireland this season had previously been keenly felt by them; and also that many of them still owe instalments for the lost boats; and (2) whether, under these circumstances, relief works will be at once started in the Glenvar district, and thus save these people from starvation?

MR. J. MORLEY: I understand that the fishermen in the Glenvar district, County Donegal, lost ten boats in the storm of the 22nd of December last, and this, no doubt, is a very serious loss to these poor people, especially during a season otherwise unfavourable. I have called upon the Inspectors of the Local Government Board to report upon the condition of the people, and whether any necessity exists for supplementing the machinery of the ordinary Poor Law in the district.

THE PAY OF THE BRITISH SOLDIER.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what would be the cost of raising the pay of the British soldier in the regular forces to a minimum of 1s. a day clear of all deductions; and, whether, in consideration of the difficulty now experienced by the private soldier in meeting necessary expenses and subscriptions, and further, with a view to increase the men's comfort and the attractions of the service, he will be willing to propose the suggested increase of pay in the forthcoming Estimates?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: A similar proposal was made by the Committee over which Lord Wantage presided, and which reported in 1892. The cost of that scheme was stated in a return laid before Parliament to be for the British establishment £809,000, and for the Indian establishment £394,000, together £1,203,000 a year. The proposal received the fullest consideration at the time, and the decision was that it was not necessary to incur this large expenditure. Nothing has since occurred to affect in any way that decision.

MAP OF AFRICA BY TREATY.

COMMANDER BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if the Map of Africa by Treaty, recently published by Sir E. Hertslet, has any official authority as well as the high authority of its author; if his attention has been called to the general map facing page 18, vol. 1; and, if he considers the spheres of influence in Central Africa to be there correctly indicated?

SIR E. GREY: The hon. and gallant Member will no doubt agree with me in appreciating the very high value which is to be attached to the Map of Africa by Treaty, and the obligation which we are all under to Sir E. Hertslet, who has compiled it. It is stated in the preface that the book has no official authority, and I am informed that the map to which attention is called was inserted at the last moment as the best general map available. The map is, however, on a very small scale, and there are in some places inaccuracies in the colouring of the boundaries.

THE LABOURERS' ACTS (IRELAND).

*MR. MICHAEL AUSTIN (Limerick, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention has been directed to a meeting of the Rural Sanitary Authority of Limerick, held on the 15th inst., to consider representations under the Labourers' Acts, at which Lord Clarina declared that if any labourer in his employment applied for a cottage he would be dismissed, as he considered the granting of those cottages was nothing more or less than outdoor relief; and what steps will be taken by the Local Government Board in protecting those labourers who apply for cottages under the Statute?

MR. F. A. O'KEEFFE (Limerick) asked a similar question.

MR. J. MORLEY: With reference to this question, and the similar one in the name of the hon. Member for West

Limerick, I have seen a newspaper report of the proceedings in question. Lord Clarina appears at the same time to have expressed his willingness to provide each of his labourers with a suitable house and a quarter acre of ground. With regard to the remark that the building of cottages under the Labourers' Acts is equivalent to granting outdoor relief to the labourers concerned, Lord Clarina based this observation apparently on the fact that the rents of the cottages, even when well paid, are by no means sufficient to meet the annual charge to the ratepayers in respect of the cost of the cottages, repairs, &c., and that practically the labourers were therefore receiving relief from the ratepayers to the extent required to make up the deficit.

Mr. CYRIL J. S. DODD (Essex, Maldon): May I ask whether the rate charged to the ratepayers is not caused to a great extent by the great expense of taking land compulsorily under these Acts?

Mr. J. MORLEY: No doubt the cost of exercising compulsory powers is great, but whether it covers the whole of the ground or not I do not know.

*Mr. M. AUSTIN: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that, according to the report of the proceedings, Lord Clarina described the labourers as a "parcel of howling, ignorant fellows," and is it compatible with his position as a Justice of the Peace to make use of the intimidating threats referred to in the question.

DISTRESS IN COUNTY MAYO.

Dr. R. AMBROSE (Mayo, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that great distress prevails in Westport, County Mayo, and that a local relief fund has been opened, and what steps, if any, he has taken to alleviate such distress?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I am informed that, in consequence of the severe weather, which has put a stop to employment, labourers in Westport have suffered considerable hardship. A local relief fund has been opened to assist these men, and in consequence of their receiving grants from this source the Guardians have been enabled to strike a number of them off the Poor Law Relief Lists. With an improvement in the weather, which I hope will soon manifest itself, these labourers will be able to resume their ordinary occupation. I may remind my hon. Friend that a Select Committee is now inquiring into the general question of distress from want of employment as affecting the whole of the United Kingdom, and that it will doubtless become necessary to collect statistics on the subject from Ireland.

THE POSTMASTER OF MULLINGAR.

Mr. L. P. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General if he is aware that the Postmaster of Mullingar has prevented the delivery of *The Westmeath Examiner* newspaper to members of the staff across the counter of Mullingar office so long as a certain episcopal prohibition remains in force. And, has he acted within his right in so doing; and, if so, is he entitled to permit the delivery of other newspapers across the counter, or will the same rule be applied to all newspapers?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Arnold Morley, Nottingham, E.): The facts appear to be as stated in the hon. Member's question. Complimentary copies of certain newspapers, of which *The Westmeath Examiner* is one, have for years past been supplied to members of the staff across the counter, and the local postmaster appears to have taken upon himself to stop the *Examiner* being so delivered on the plea of episcopal prohibition. Into the particulars of this prohibition it is of course no part of my duty to inquire, but I am clearly of opinion that the Postmaster should not have allowed his religious opinions to have influenced his official conduct, and that all of the papers should have been stopped or else none at all. I have given directions that *The Westmeath Examiner* is to continue to be received across the counter as heretofore.

CRANBROOK POST OFFICE.

Mr. L. HARDY (Kent, Ashford): I beg to ask the Postmaster General, whether he can now give a definite reply to the memorial of the inhabitants of Cranbrook and district, praying that the sub-office at Cranbrook may now be made a head post office.

Mr. A. MORLEY: The question is still under consideration, but I hope that it will be possible to give a definite reply to the memorialists within the course of a few days.

THE BERAR PROVINCES.

Mr. SEYMOUR KEAY (Elgin & Nairn): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether there is any foundation for the statement that His Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad is being pressed to assign to the British Government the surplus revenues of his Berar provinces, or to assign fresh districts for the support of the Imperial defence troops?

The SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Mr. H. H. Fowler, Wolverhampton, E.): The statement, so far as I am aware, is without foundation.

THE BISHOP OF HADJIN.

Mr. C. E. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government are aware that, in spite of the representations already made to the Porte, Dr. Kazandjian, Bishop of Hadjin, is still detained in exile amongst the Circassians of Bounboudj; and whether, in consideration of the advanced age and infirmities of that prelate, and the veneration in which he is held by the Armenian population of Hadjin, Her Majesty's Government will again endeavour to obtain the Bishop's release?

*Sir E. GREY: I regret that I cannot add to answers which I have previously given, and which referred to this case amongst others. Any steps which may be possible must be left to the discretion of Her Majesty's Ambassador, who will not lose any favourable opportunity of calling attention to this case.

FINES BY COLLIERY OWNERS.

Mr. J. CALDWELL (Mid Lanark): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the fines imposed by colliery proprietors in Scotland in respect of foreign material found in hutches, and which exceed, in some cases, the amount paid to the miner for the whole coal sent up in the hutch; and whether such fines are legal; and, if so, whether he is prepared to bring in Legislation for dealing with such fines and with other fines imposed by colliery proprietors?

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. H. H. Asquith, Fife, E.): My attention has recently been called to several cases of deductions made by colliery owners for dirt. I am advised that in certain of these cases the deductions are illegal, and I have instructed the Inspectors to request that they may be discontinued, failing which, it will be my duty to cause legal proceeding to be taken. In view of these proceedings, it is perhaps inexpedient to enter into details respecting particular cases, but I may say generally, that I am prepared to see that the existing law is put in force; and in a Bill which I hope to introduce, I shall consider the expediency of amending the law with respect to checkweighing, so as to put a stop to all unfair fines or deductions.

PARISH COUNCILLORS IN SCOTLAND.

Mr. SEYMOUR KEAY: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, whether the electors of a ward-parish have any redress either by appeal to the Local Government Board for Scotland, or otherwise, in a case where a County Council has allocated the number of County Councillors to each ward in a manner which appears to them to be contrary to the letter and spirit of the Local Government (Scotland) Act; and, whether the Local Government Board for Scotland have power to ask a County Council to state its reasons for having made such an allocation.

The SECRETARY for SCOTLAND (Sir George O. Trevelyan, Glasgow, Bridgeton): I presume my hon. Friend refers to Parish Councillors, not to County Councillors, who are elected in single-member wards. In the case of Parish Councillors, I have already stated that the Local Government Board has no power to interfere. The Local Government Board has certainly power to ask for the reasons of the County Council, but it has no power to demand an answer; and it is very doubtful, whether it is wise for a public department to interfere in matters, which Parliament has deliberately placed outside their control.

POOR LAW GUARDIANS AND DISTRESS.

MR. ROBERT W. HANBURY: On behalf of the hon. Member for the Western Division of Wolverhampton (Sir A. Hickman), I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board—(1) if he will explain, for the information of public bodies, what description of work is pointed to in his circular of 11th February, as being such that all can perform, whatever may have been their previous avocations, which will not compete with that of other labourers at present in employment, and which can be carried on during the present frost; and (2) whether he will, by legislative enactment if necessary, enable boards of guardians, to administer temporary assistance, under exceptional circumstances like the present, without necessarily disfranchising the recipients, instead of imposing the duty of doing so upon public bodies, who have no staff or organisation practised in the investigation of the need for, or the administration of, relief.

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE: The works referred to in the first paragraph of the question, are those specified in the circular. No doubt during the continuance of hard frost, many of these works could not be undertaken, and where the weather is such that outdoor work is impracticable, the suggestions in the circular do not apply. In issuing it, however, I hoped that the frost would not be long continued, or at any rate, that it would not affect all parts of the country. Questions as to the power of Guardians with regard to relief and as to the carrying out of works by other Local Authorities are, as it appears to me, matters which will be considered by the Committee on Distress which is now sitting. Until the Committee have made a Report on these matters, I feel unable to give an answer on the question of disfranchisement.

THE COUNCIL OF INDIA.

MR. NAOROJI (Finsbury, Central): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether Sir Robert H. Davis's term of office as Member of the Council of India expires on the 3rd of March next; whether it is proposed to allow the vacancy to lapse in accordance with the terms of the Council of India Reduction Act of 1889, which provides that the Secretary of State may, if and whenever he thinks fit, permit the Council to be reduced to ten Members by absorbing vacancies as they occur; and, whether the Council at present consists of twelve Members?

MR. H. H. FOWLER: Under the Act to which my hon. Friend refers, the Council of India has been reduced from fifteen to twelve members. I do not think that it would be to the public advantage to make any further reduction at present.

AMATONGALAND.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies in whom the Sovereignty of Amatongaland is vested; whether there is any effective British occupation of the country; whether there are any resident British Officials in the district; and, what are the names of such officials?

THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): Under the McMahon Award the northern part of Amatongaland was placed within the sphere of influence of Portugal; all that part south of the Portuguese line is, as I stated the other day, distinctly within the sphere of British influence. As regards our relations with the Chief, he has acknowledged that, as regards the above southern portion of his territory, he obeys the Queen. There is no staff of British officers in the country, but, when necessary for the transaction of business with the Tongas, an officer is sent from Zululand.

ARMENIAN INQUIRY.

MR. F. S. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs—(1) whether the Turkish Authorities have refused to allow the proposed visit of European delegates attending the Sasun Inquiry to surrounding villages for the purpose of obtaining information, on the ground that the business of the foreign delegates is to watch the proceedings and not to collect evidence; (2) whether they have also objected to a proposal to visit the village of Thenik, which had been demolished, as well as to an alternative suggestion that the inhabitants of the village should be brought to Mush to give evidence; and (3) whether he is prepared either to make a brief statement with regard to the nature and extent of the powers and duties of the European delegates, especially in connection with the steps they are empowered to take for ensuring the security of witnesses, or to lay upon the Table the instructions given to the British delegates.

*SIR E. GREY: The first paragraph of my hon. Friend's question must be founded upon a misapprehension. There has been no question of interfering with the movements of the European delegates. There was some difference of opinion as to whether the Commission itself should at once visit a certain village called Haskim or not, but an agreement on this point was arrived at to the satisfaction of the delegates. As far as Her Majesty's Government are aware there has not been any proposal to visit Shenik itself, but some witnesses who belonged to that village or its neighbourhood are being examined. The Delegates are to be in constant attendance at the Commission, and to be informed of all its investigations. They can call for corrections in its daily reports; can, if necessary, direct its researches by indicating places to be visited or persons to be examined, and secure that any questions which they think desirable shall be put in a satisfactory form, or, failing that, may, in case of necessity, put the questions themselves.

MR. F. STEVENSON: Will my hon. Friend say what are their powers as regards the security of witnesses?

*SIR E. GREY: The Delegates could not have any power of administration in Armenia, or anything of that kind, but if they think that the apprehension of my hon. Friend expressed in his question is likely to interfere with the satisfactory working of the Commission they would report that matter in the ordinary course of their respective Embassies.

MR. F. A. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): On what is the hon. Gentleman's information based?

*SIR E. GREY: It is based upon the instructions given to the Delegates by their respective Governments.

SLAVERY IN ZANZIBAR AND PEMBA.

COMMANDER BETHELL: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, if any steps are being taken to abolish slavery in the Islands of Zanzibar and Pemba, now under the protectorate of Great Britain?

*SIR E. GREY: As I stated on the 7th, a Vice Consul has been established at Pemba, and Her Majesty's Government are now considering how the object in view can best be obtained.

OUTBREAK IN NIGER PROTECTORATE.

*MR. F. W. LAWRENCE (Liverpool, Abercromby): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, with reference to the attack on Akassa by the Brassmen—(1) whether, since the creation of the Niger Company and its practical monopoly, the trade of Brass in palm oil has not declined to one-sixth of what it was, and that the district is becoming less populous in consequence; (2) whether he is aware that the Niger Delta is broken up with countless channels where the Brassmen have traded from time immemorial without let or hindrance; (3) whether two sets of Duties are leviable in the Delta by two different Authorities, with no very distinct line of demarcation between them; (4) whether, under the circumstances of the case, the Government will see that no capital punishment is exacted before they have been communicated with; and, (5) whether they will institute an inquiry into the cause of the disturbance by an independent authority on the spot.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whether, in view of the observations of Sir Claud MacDonald, at page 11, of Africa, No 1, 1895, inquiry will be held as to the responsibility of the Royal Niger Company (Chartered and Limited) for the recent rising of the natives of the Brass District of the Niger Coast Protectorate, who are described by the Administrator as deprived of a means of subsistence by the action of the Company, and, therefore, perhaps not unnaturally, discontented?

*SIR E. GREY: It is known that the people at Brass have suffered from the breaking down of their monopoly of the markets, owing to the opening up of the Interior to general trade. It is necessary to exact reparation for the outrages, and the means of doing so have been left to the British officers on the spot, who have already offered to the Brassmen terms, which were—the restoration of plunder, the payment of reasonable fines, and the surrender of arms and war lances. These, have, I regret to say, been refused, but when reparation has been exacted, an inquiry will be made into the causes, and possible means of alleviating grievances.

CHINA AND JAPAN.

Mr. H. LABOUCHERE (Northampton, E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether instructions were sent during the Parliamentary Recess to Her Majesty's Ambassadors accredited to the Great European Powers, to suggest to the respective Governments to which they were accredited a joint mediation in the dispute between China and Japan; whether China had asked for this mediation; and, if so, whether any steps were taken before the above instructions were sent to Her Majesty's Ambassadors to learn whether Japan would agree to it; whether replies were sent to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs by Her Majesty's Ambassadors after the suggestion had been made to the Governments to which they were respectively accredited; and whether all Papers connected with this suggested mediation will be laid upon the Table of the House?

***Sir E. GREY**: In consequence of authoritative information, received by Her Majesty's Government at one time during the Recess, steps were taken to sound the other Governments of Europe and of the United States, to ascertain if in their opinion there was any possibility of bringing about a peace between China and Japan upon certain terms. Replies were received and were generally favourable. Later on Papers will no doubt be laid, which will include communications between the various Powers interested, but they cannot be published without previous reference to the other Powers, nor at the present stage of affairs between China and Japan.

Sir E. Grey.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: Do I understand that they will not be published until the war is over?

***Sir E. GREY**: I should like to hope for an early termination of the war, and to answer that question in the affirmative; but, as I cannot foresee what the course of the war may be, I am afraid I cannot give my hon. Friend an answer.

CHRISTIANS IN TURKEY.

Mr. H. FELL PEASE: On behalf of the hon. Member for North Manchester (Mr. C. E. Schwann), I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, in view of the increasing gravity of the situation of the Christian prisoners in Turkey, who have been incarcerated elsewhere than in the villayet of Bitlis, without trial or after mock trials, Her Majesty's Government will propose to the signatory Powers of the Treaty of Berlin the speedy appointment of International Consular Commissions to simultaneously take such measures as may be necessary for the security or the lives of the Christian prisoners in Turkish gaols?

***Sir E. GREY**: My hon. Friend is aware that several cases which appeared to deserve consideration have from time to time received the close attention of Her Majesty's Embassy, but, in our opinion, it would in no way promote or strengthen the combined action of the Powers who are interested to make any further suggestions for international action pending the Report of the Commission which is now sitting,

THE NAVY ESTIMATES.

Mr. H. O. ARNOLD-FORSTER: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he can state on what day the first Vote on Navy Estimates will be submitted to the House?

Mr. E. ROBERTSON: We hope to lay the Navy Estimates on the Table to-morrow week, or at latest on Saturday week. The question as to when the first Vote will be taken is one for the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

THE COMMITTEE ON THE COMPANIES ACT.

Mr. R. V. BARROW (Southwark, Bermondsey): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if the Committee sitting upon Limited Liability Company

Law is likely to produce their Report in time to enable the Government to give effect to same in a Bill to be brought before the House at a reasonable period of the present Session?

MR. BRYCE: The Committee on the Companies Acts have been giving most assiduous attention to the difficult questions referred to them, and have made so much progress that I trust they may be in a position to report within the next few weeks; and I continue to entertain the hope that it may be possible to legislate on the subject in the present Session.

FRANCE AND MADAGASCAR.

MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs (1) whether Her Majesty's Government recognise the hostilities now taking place between France and Madagascar as constituting a state of War, and as giving, both to France and Madagascar, belligerent rights as against neutrals; if so, whether Her Majesty's Government propose (as is usual in war) to prohibit all ships of war of either belligerent from making use of any port or roadstead, either in the United Kingdom, or in any British Colony, dependency, or possession, for any warlike purpose, from remaining in any such port or roadstead more than 24 hours, and from taking in any provisions beyond what may be necessary for immediate use; (2) whether, in that case, Her Majesty's Government propose to pursue the usual course (as was pursued with regard to the war between China and Japan) of giving to Her Majesty's subjects due notice by Proclamation of the existence of state of war, and enjoining on them the duty of observing strict neutrality between the belligerents, and of abstaining from giving assistance to either of them; and (3) in case Her Majesty's Government hold that these hostilities do not constitute a state of war, whether Her Majesty's Government have taken, or will take, such steps as may be necessary to protect Her Majesty's subjects in the exercise of their rights of free access to the coasts and ports both of France and Madagascar, without interference, either by visit and search on the high seas, or by so-called blockade or otherwise, on the part of either party to these hostilities?

*SIR E. GREY: Her Majesty's Government consider that a state of hostilities exists between France and Madagascar, which may involve the exercise of belligerent rights as against neutrals. But in cases where such hostilities are not likely to extend to the high seas, it is not necessary for purposes of neutrality, nor has it been usual, to issue regulations of the nature described. The question asked in the second paragraph has already been answered in the negative. With reference to the third paragraph. Her Majesty's Government will be ready to protect British subjects in the exercise of such rights as they are properly entitled to in the circumstances of the case.

KILLYBEGS PIER.

MR. J. G. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury when will the construction of the pier at Killybegs, which was promised so far back as September 1892, be commenced; and whether, having regard to the lack of employment, the failure of the potato crop, and the widespread distress in this district of Donegal, a work which would give a means of livelihood to many heads of families will be no longer delayed; also, whether the right hon. Gentleman was aware that upwards of 200 families in the immediate neighbourhood of Killybegs, County Donegal, are at present in the deepest distress through the failure of the potato crop, and are at the present time suffering from the scarcity of food; and whether, having regard to the perilous condition of these families, for whom in 1891 subsistence was provided by work on the Light Railway line then in course of construction, he will take steps for their relief by the institution of works of public utility?

MR. J. MORLEY: No reports have reached the Local Government Board as to the existence of abnormal destitution in Killybegs, and they point out that there has been, so far, no increase in the numbers receiving relief. The Board have requested their Inspector, who is at present in the district, to report as to the condition of the people. With regard to the question of the erection of a pier at Killybegs, the Irish Government, as I have just observed, are in communication on the subject with the Congested Districts Board, but so far no decision has been come to in the matter.

DISTRESS IN THE BOYLE UNION.

MR. M. M. BODKIN (Roscommon, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention has been called to the unanimous Resolution of the Boyle Board of Guardians, setting out the general and acute distress within the limits of their Union, and urging the claim of the district to a share of the relief works about to be instituted by the Government; and, if he will kindly give that claim his early and favourable consideration?

MR. J. MORLEY: I have been furnished with a copy of the Resolution in question. Careful inquiries are now in progress as to the condition of the people, and should any information reach the Local Government Board showing that there is a necessity for supplementing the ordinary Poor Laws, the matter will be promptly brought under the notice of Government.

ILLEGAL TRAWLING.

*MR. J. G. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that, although the gunboat *Jackal* is at the disposal of the Fishery Board for Scotland for the purpose of protecting the Moray Firth and other parts of the North-East of Scotland from illegal trawling, such trawling has, nevertheless, been actively carried on for some time past on these coasts; and whether he will state the number of days the *Jackal* was at sea between the 1st September, 1894, and 31st January, 1895, the number of days she was in harbour, the names of the harbours she visited, the dates of her visits, and how long she stayed in each during that time; whether she effected the capture of any trawlers during the time specified; and, if so, will he state the names and numbers of such trawlers and the date or dates of such capture or captures?

SIR G. O. TREVELYAN: Although H.M.S. *Jackal* is assigned to the Fishery Board she was not under their control from 16th October to 10th January, owing to her having to undergo repairs and to arrangements in her *personnel* for which the Admiralty is responsible. Between the dates mentioned she was 29 days at sea and in harbour, excluding Sundays, 102 days. She captured one trawler, and visited Aberdeen, Invergordon, Wick, Inverness, Fortrose and Cromarty Harbours. In the absence of H.M.S. *Jackal*, the cruisers *Niger* and *Cockchafer* were detailed by the Admiralty to take her place and to protect the fisheries from illegal trawling. The Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty have during the past year rendered much assistance to the Fishery Board in despatching cruisers for the protection of the fishing industry. During that period, no fewer than 32 cases of alleged illegal trawling have been proceeded against, and three more are still under investigation, besides the recent capture of seven trawlers by the *Jackal*.

*MR. WEIR asked whether the right hon. Gentleman could give the name of the trawler which was captured by the *Jackal* in October last?

SIR. G. O. TREVELYAN said that two accounts had been received on the matter, one from the Admiralty, and one from the Fishery Board. One called the trawler the *North West* and the other the *North Star*.

THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS COMMISSION.

*MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, whether, in view of the fact that the Chairman of the Royal Commission (Highlands and Islands 1892) has informed the Secretary for Scotland that the final proofs of the maps to accompany the Report of the Royal Commission are expected to be in the hands of the Stationery Office by the end of this month, he can state the probable date when the Report will be ready for presentation to Parliament?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): The letterpress of the Report of the Highlands and Islands Commission is, I am informed, already in type, and copies could be struck off in a few days if required. The maps have not yet all been received at the Stationery Office. It will take, probably, about six weeks to lithograph and strike off the necessary number of copies after the receipt of the last map at the Stationery Office.

FINANCIAL CRISIS IN NEWFOUNDLAND.

SIR F. EVANS (Southampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies if the Government will lay upon the Table all correspondence which has passed between the Imperial Government and the Government of Newfoundland relating to the present financial crisis in that Colony, and to the request for aid by the Government of Newfoundland?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: Correspondence on the subject will be laid when it is complete.

SIR F. EVANS wished to point out that in his question he asked the hon. Gentleman for all correspondence that had taken place between the Government of this country and the Government of Newfoundland in relation to the present financial crisis in that country, and to reply that the correspondence would be laid on the Table when completed, was to say that no correspondence would be laid on the Table of the House until the present grave and dire distress had passed away. Under these circumstances he hoped the hon. Gentleman would see his way to answer the question a little more fully.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON said, it was not a usual practice to present incomplete correspondence, but he would see whether an exception could be made in this instance.

TIPPERARY POOR LAW UNION.

MR. F. MANDEVILLE (Tipperary, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, can he state what is the cause of the delay of the Local Government Board in sending an arbitrator to value the plots of land and the proposed sites for labourers' cottages at Rhodus and Emly, in the Tipperary Poor Law Union; will he arrange to have those plots of land, &c., valued now, so as the labourers may get possession, fence in, and cultivate them early this spring; is he aware that for the work of fencing in the plots of land the labourers would get paid by the Poor Law Guardians, and that this employment in itself would be a boon to the labourers in the present hard and trying season; and, would the Local Government Board remove the cause of those complaints, and send an arbitrator immediately to value the plots of land for labourers in the parish of Emly, Tipperary Poor Law Union?

MR. J. MORLEY: An arbitrator cannot be sent down in such cases until the Provisional Order authorising the Guardians' Improvement Scheme has become absolute, or, if it be petitioned against, has been confirmed by the Privy Council. The Provisional Order in this instance was signed only on the 1st inst., and on the 4th copies were sent to the Guardians with a view to their being served upon the owners and occupiers of the lands proposed to be taken. The Local Government Board have not yet been informed by the Guardians whether this has been done, and the order has not so far, therefore, been published. As there is a right of appeal allowed to all parties interested for one month from the date of the publication of the order, it is evident that the appointment of an arbitrator, however desirable the object in view, cannot at present be made.

MR. SADLER AND THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

MR. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he will lay upon the Table the terms of the new appointment to the Education Department which has been given to Mr. Sadler, together with any correspondence concerning the need of such appointment, and state whether the creation of this new appointment was recommended by the permanent heads of the Education Department, or by any other Educational Authorities; and, if so, whether he will lay these Papers upon the Table?

MR. A. H. ACLAND: I have told the hon. Gentleman what the purposes are for which the appointment which he mentions has been made. It is held on the same conditions as other similar posts in the Civil Service. The laying on the Table of the correspondence with the Treasury on the subject is, I think, unnecessary. I think it is contrary to the interest of the public service that I should say anything about the opinion of my advisers at the Department on this matter or any other matter of this sort.

MR. BARTLEY: Are we to understand that this appointment has been made on the initiative of the right hon.

Gentleman, and that a personal friend has been put over the heads of officials? I am only asking whether it is a fact that this gentleman has been placed over the heads of men who have been many years in the public service, and without even possessing the qualifications which are required of other persons in the public service.

MR. ACLAND did not reply.

MR. BARTLEY: I shall put a further question on the Paper with regard to this matter.

BALLYSHANNON AND BUNDORAN MAIL SERVICE.

MR. R. M. DANE (Fermanagh, N.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is aware that at present the Mail Service from the Bundoran Junction to Ballyshannon and Bundoran towns and district is carried along the county road parallel to the railway, and owing to the constant delays in connection therewith much inconvenience has been caused to traders and others; could he state what is the existing contract for the carriage of such mails, and when will it terminate; and, whether he would consider of making an arrangement with the railway company for the carriage of the same?

MR. ARNOLD MORLEY: The question of substituting a Night Mail Service by railway for the present Mail Cart Service between Bundoran Junction, Ballyshannon, and Bundoran, has been several times fully considered. There are no trains running which would be suitable for the Mail Service, and the last communication on the subject from the railway company made it quite clear that the establishment of special trains for postal purposes would entail a heavy outlay far in excess of any payment that I should be justified in sanctioning. The prospect seems no more favourable at the present time, and I regret, therefore, that I cannot meet the hon. Member's views.

DISTRESS IN COUNTY CORK.

MR. J. C. FLYNN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether his attention has been called to the remarkable evidence given by Mr. Micks, Secretary to the Congested Districts Board, at the sitting of the Financial Relations Commission, in which he bore testimony to the deplorable condition of the ordinary farm labourers in portions of North Cork, saying it is worse than that of their brethren in the congested districts of Connaught; and whether, in view of the almost total failure of the potato crop in that district, the Government will accede to the request contained in the Resolution of the Kanturk Board of Guardians of 22nd November, 1894, and grant reproductive loans to tenant farmers at low interest for the purpose of providing useful employment for the labourers, and thus alleviating distress, as was done in 1881, when money was advanced to landlords at nominal interest; also his attention had been directed to Resolutions of the Kanturk (county Cork) Board of Guardians, pointing out the acute distress and suffering now prevailing amongst the smaller tenants and the labourers in many parts of that Union, owing to the almost total failure of the potato crop and the utter lack of employment; and whether, in view of this condition of things, he will accede to the request of the guardians and allocate a portion of the funds set apart for the opening of relief works to the needs of this Union?

MR. J. MORLEY: My attention has been drawn to a newspaper report of the observations of the Secretary to the Congested Districts Board on the occasion in question. No doubt the granting of small loans to farmers, as suggested, would lead to the circulation of money among the labouring classes generally, but as a measure of immediate relief it is doubtful whether it would be effective in reaching the most necessitous cases. The Spring work will commence upon the breaking up of the frost, when it is hoped the temporary difficulties of the labouring classes will be at an end. The numbers in receipt of outdoor relief in this Union are considerably less than at the corresponding period of last year. With regard to the condition of the smaller tenants in the Union, the Local Government Board have made inquiries but do not consider that their circumstances are such as to call for the opening of relief works.

MR. FLYNN asked whether, if relief works could not be started, the right hon. Gentleman would see that instructions were issued to the Local Government Board to meet the distress by granting additional outdoor relief, and whether he would endeavour to prevent persons who were in receipt of outdoor relief from being disfranchised?

DR. TANNER (Mid Cork) asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would extend any action he might take to the neighbouring Union, which was also keenly in want of relief of some kind.

MR. J. MORLEY said he had no power to interfere with the question of disfranchisement, but pointed out that Boards of Guardians had powers to deal with exceptional distress.

PORTADOWN POST OFFICE.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General when it is proposed to commence the building of the new post office at Portadown?

COLONEL SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.) asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would endeavour to push on the erection of this office in order that some much needed work might be provided in that part of the county?

MR. ARNOLD MORLEY: The question is more properly one for the Chief Secretary as representing the Board of Public Works in Ireland; but I have ascertained that plans and specifications for the new post office building at Portadown will be ready by the 1st of April, and that tenders will then be invited. Provision for the expenditure has been made in the Board's Estimates for 1895-6.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON: May I ask the Chief Secretary for Ireland whether he will use his influence in this matter?

MR. J. MORLEY: The question should be addressed to my right hon. Friend the Secretary to the Treasury.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON: Then I will ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he will use his influence with the Treasury to get this building erected immediately?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT said he would do his utmost to meet the wishes of the hon. and gallant gentleman.

GUARANTEE DEPOSITS IN IRELAND.

MR. USBORNE (Essex, Chelmsford): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will agree to pay the Irish landlords who have sold their estates under Lord Ashbourne's Act one-third of the amount of their guarantee deposits on the expiration of one-third of the period for which those deposits were arranged to be held?

MR. J. MORLEY: By the 3rd section of the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act of 1885, it is enacted that—

> "The Land Commission shall retain the guarantee deposit until they ascertain and by order declare that the person liable for the repayment of the advance has repaid on account of principal money a sum equal to the guarantee deposit, and shall then pay over the guarantee deposit to the person entitled thereto."

From this it will be seen that there is no power to release a guarantee deposit or any part thereof until the provisions of the above-quoted section have been fully complied with. Under normal circumstances it will take about 17½ years to repay on account of principal a sum equal to a guarantee deposit of one-fifth of an advance. The Land Commissioners do not recommend the change suggested.

POST OFFICE SERVANTS AND BETTING TELEGRAMS.

*MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough): I beg to ask the Postmaster General, whether his attention has been called to a recent prosecution at the Central Criminal Court, conducted by Her Majesty's Solicitor General, against two employees of the General Post Office and others, on a charge of conspiracy to forge and alter betting telegrams, and to utter such telegrams with intent to defraud certain bookmakers, in the course of which prosecution the existence was proved of a racing department at the central office in direct communication with every racecourse, and affording every facility for the transmission of "starting price" betting telegrams; and whether he will take steps to prevent the Post Office being made the medium for betting transactions, which, if made at any other place, might render the parties liable to penalties under the Betting Acts?

MR. A. MORLEY: The prosecution to which the hon. Member refers was instituted by me, and I am fully aware of the circumstances of this deplorable case. It is hardly correct to say that there is a racing department in the

Central Telegraph Office, though, for convenience of arrangement and working, the wires dealing with similar classes of work are grouped together. I have no reason to believe that telegrams which might render the sender liable to penalties under the Betting Acts are numerous. But in any case it would be inconsistent with my duty, which obliges me to forward telegrams without preference, to attempt to discriminate between the different classes of telegrams entrusted to the Post Office for transmission.

THE ESTATE DUTY.

Mr. E. BOULNOIS (Marylebone, E.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether, with the view of facilitating payments before Grant of Probate (or Administration) for the purpose of defraying Estate Duty, he will arrange that the Inland Revenue Authorities shall receive the papers necessary for Probate (or Administration) and, after approval of them, issue a memorandum that the grant to A.B. awaits only the payment within (say) a month of £ Estate Duty, and should the grant after all not be made as proposed, return in due course to the payer thereof any duty received?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir W. Harcourt, Derby): This could not be done without Legislation, even if it were desirable from the point of view either of the taxpayer or of the Revenue. But, in my judgment, it would be very undesirable for the taxpayer, as well as for the Exchequer. The Grant of Probate would in many cases be greatly delayed, while the collection of the Revenue would be retarded.

THE FINANCE ACT, 1894.

Mr. HANBURY: On behalf of the hon. Member for Lynn Regis (Mr. T. Gibson Bowles), I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention has been given to Section 1 of the Finance Act, 1894, which merges in the estate duty the legacy and succession duties at the rate of £1 per cent., and enacts that these 1 per cent. legacy and succession duties shall no longer be levied in respect of property on which estate duty has been paid; whether he is aware that, in numerous cases, the 1 per cent. duties were paid in advance, in anticipation of the death of the person at whose decease the property would pass, such payments being made before the passing of the Finance Act; whether, in all such cases, the Commissioners of Inland Revenue have insisted, and still insist, on the payment of the full estate duty, and at the same time refuse to make any allowance therefrom of the 1 per cent. duty which had been paid in advance, although such 1 per cent. duty is now abolished in respect of all property on which estate duty has been paid; and whether the Commissioners of Inland Revenue are justified by the Act in thus retaining duties paid in anticipation of a death, when, on the actual occurrence of the death, it is found that those duties have been abolished and merged in another duty which has been duly paid?

Sir W. HARCOURT: I believe in this matter that the view taken by the Commissioners of Inland Revenue is in accordance with the law. I have not yet had the opportunity of fully examining the points referred to. If I find that any practical injustice has arisen, I will consider what remedy should be applied.

INDIAN STATE RAILWAYS.

Mr. HANBURY: On behalf of the hon. Member for the Western Division of Wolverhampton (Sir A. Hickman), I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India —(1) whether he is aware that the tests, requirements, and stipulations for steel for the Indian State Railways are such as are imposed by no other railways in the world; (2) whether he is aware that such stipulations add materially to the price paid, and compel the use of foreign ores and materials instead of those produced in this country; and (3) whether he will consider the advisability of relaxing these tests, so as to allow of the use on the Indian railways of British materials?

Mr. H. H. FOWLER: My answer to the first two clauses of the hon. Member's question is in the negative. As regards the alleged exclusion of British ores and materials, I am advised that the exclusion of basic steel is confined to the case of axles, tyres, and locomotives generally; that the best class of this basic steel is accepted, with certain exceptions, for girders; and that the commoner class is freely accepted when offered for rails and sleepers, which form the bulk of the steel sent to India. In view of the great importance of securing the best qualities of material, I am advised that it would be undesirable to propose any relaxation of the existing tests.

THE CASES OF HYPNOTISM.

SIR D. H. MACFARLANE (Argyllshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been called to a public exhibition of hypnotism at the Aquarium, where men and women are kept in a state of suspended animation, which, in the opinion of the medical authorities, is attended with considerable risk to life; and whether he can take any steps to put an end to such exhibitions?

MR. ASQUITH: I have received a report from the Police on this subject which is to the effect that, according to their information, there is no evidence that the exhibitions in question are attended with risk to the persons who are the subjects of them; and, in the absence of evidence of such risk, it is not a case in which the police can interfere.

THE PROSECUTION AT NEWMARKET.

MR. CYRIL J. S. DODD (Essex, Maldon): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether he will procure and circulate for the information of those Members who desire it a print of the shorthand notes of the evidence before the justices at Newmarket, given in the recent case under the Betting Law, so that they may have the advantage of the decision there given, in order to determine whether this House should repeal or amend the present law in regard to public betting.

MR. ASQUITH: A full report of the case appeared in *The Times* of the 13th and 18th inst. The prosecution was not a Government prosecution, and I have no information as to whether any shorthand notes of the evidence were taken beyond those taken for Press purposes; nor do I think in any case that I should be justified in circulating at the public expense the transcript of shorthand notes of proceedings of which an adequate newspaper report is already accessible.

DISTRESS IN COUNTY CORK.

DR. TANNER (Mid Cork): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been directed to the great distress and scarcity of fuel, now prevailing in Millstreet, County Cork; and whether that district will be generously considered when the sum recently voted is being distributed?

MR. J. MORLEY: The Local Government Board have received no reports as to the alleged existence of great distress and scarcity of fuel in Millstreet Union. The numbers on outdoor relief have not increased as compared with corresponding period of last year, and the Board state that the Guardians did not think it necessary to apply for a loan for seed potatoes this year. The Board will instruct their Inspectors to make further inquiries and report on the condition of the people in this district.

POLICE AT MILLSTREET, COUNTY CORK.

DR. TANNER: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been directed to the extraordinary number of police now stationed in Millstreet, County Cork; and, whether, the peaceful condition of the district being considered, a material reduction in the numbers of constabulary may now be made?

MR. J. MORLEY: The number of police now stationed at Millstreet is 17, which, I am informed, is below the former strength. The area comprised in the district is unusually large, and contains 50 townlands. An adjoining sub-district was broken up in July 1892, and most of it was merged in the Millstreet sub-district. The Constabulary Authorities are of opinion that the strength of tht force at Millstreet cannot at present be reduced.

DISTRESS IN GALWAY.

MR. J. PINKERTON (Galway): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, if his attention has been directed to resolutions, passed by the Galway Board of Guardians and by the Harbour Board, pointing out that owing to the extreme severity of the weather there is a complete paralysis of trade, and, in consequence, numbers of people are without employment and in want of the bare necessaries of life; and that, as the Board of Guardians are unable to cope with the widespread and far-reaching distress caused by the failure of the potato crop, they urge upon the Government the necessity for starting works of public utility in order to provide employment for these people; and what steps, if any, the Government have taken to meet the urgent requirements of the case.

Mr. J. MORLEY: I have seen the resolutions to which reference is made. In Galway, as in other towns, the labouring classes have undoubtedly suffered from want of employment caused by the recent severe weather; but the Local Government Board are of opinion that this distress, which is of a temporary character, can be met by the ordinary Poor Laws. Their Inspector has been directed to visit Galway and inquire closely into the condition and resources of the poor in the town. I may add that it is proposed to open works for the relief of small landholders in some of the Western portions of the Galway Union.

BOROUGH MAYORS AS COUNTY TRUSTEES.

Mr. H. SETON-KARR (St. Helen's): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when the proposed directions in reference to the qualification of mayors of boroughs for the county bench, under the Local Government Act of 1894, will be issued by Her Majesty's Government; whether these directions will provide for mayors' oaths being taken before justices for either counties or boroughs, or before justices for the County only; and, whether mayors may safely qualify before the actual directions are issued?

Mr. ASQUITH: I am not sure to what proposed directions the hon. Member refers. There is no intention at present to issue any directions as to the qualification of mayors of boroughs to act, under the Local Government Act, 1894, as justices for the county in which such boroughs are situated. But a circular letter is in the Press, and will shortly be sent to the authorities concerned, informing them that the chairman of an urban or rural district council under that Act, being in virtue of it an *ex-officio* justice of the peace for the county in which such district is situate, may take the oath of allegiance and judicial oath required to be taken by such justice before two or more justices for the county, sitting in petty sessions.

JUNIOR TELEGRAPH CLERKS.

Sir A. K. ROLLIT (Islington, S.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether, as junior telegraph clerks are compelled to take their annual leave during the months of January, February, November, and December, he will favourably consider the expediency of confining the holidays within eight months of the year, as in the case of sorters and postmen?

Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY: I am anxious, whenever it is possible without serious expense and inconvenience to the Service, to enable the Staff to take their annual leave in the more pleasant months of the year, but I regret that in the case of Telegraphists it is not always easy or practicable to do this, as the Telegraphic business is heaviest in the summer months, and requires, therefore, in those months the larger staff.

THE INDIAN PUNITIVE POLICE FORCE.

Mr. W. S. CAINE (Bradford, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if the punitive police force is still quartered on the village of Balladhun?

Mr. H. H. FOWLER: The punitive police force quartered on the villages in the Cachar district, of which Balladhun is one, was sanctioned for one year only, which ended on the 30th June 1894. On the 4th June the Chief Commissioner declined to sanction its retention for a further period. It may, therefore, be assumed that the force has been withdrawn.

A VACANT CROWN FARM.

Mr. A. C. MORTON: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the vacant Crown farm in Suffolk has been offered to tenants as small holdings or allotments; if not, will he offer it for those purposes at reasonable rents; and whether he will also consider if the land could with advantage be offered as an experiment for afforestation, the Crown to find the necessary capital at a low rate of interest?

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT: No application for small holdings or allotments on the Crown farm in hand at Shimpling, Suffolk, has been received, and the Commissioner of Woods is not aware of any demand for them. The land is understood to be ill suited for the purpose as the soil is very stiff, often requiring three or four horses to a plough. The Commissioners of Woods have no power to advance money to others for experimental purposes, and they consider that as a whole the Estate is too wet and stiff for the growth of timber. Oak is almost the only thing that could be tried, and that would not, the Commissioners think, ever grow timber that would pay.

LOANS UNDER THE ASHBOURNE ACT.

MR. J. TULLY (Leitrim, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that John Lynch, senior, of Deffier, South Leitrim, in the year 1893, applied to the Board of Works for a loan of £35, and the inspector having visited his land, he paid on the 1st December, 1893, ten shillings on account of preliminary expenses, but that on the 6th January, 1894, the Board of Works refused to consider the application for the loan, and have retained the money he forwarded them; and, whether, as this tenant purchased his holding under the Ashbourne Act, and was willing to give solvent security for the repayment of the loan, he will be prepared to recommend, in view of the prevailing distress, that the rule of the Board of Works in these cases be modified or suspended, and the loan granted to this man to enable him and his family to make necessary improvements on their holding.

*SIR J. T. HIBBERT: John Lynch, of Deffier, Co. Leitrim, on 27th November, 1893, applied for a loan of £35, and lodged the usual deposit of ten shillings to cover expenses in the event of the loan not being proceeded with. Before a loan can be granted under the Land Law Act, 1881, the Board of Works, amongst other conditions, have to be satisfied that it is required to meet the cash expenditure involved by the proposed works, and not as a fund from which to recoup the applicant and members of his family for their personal labour. The Board's Inspector estimated the value of the proposed work at £38. 17s. if done by hired labour, but reported that the applicant and his three sons could do half at least of the work. This reduced the estimate of cost to £19. 8s. 6d., and, as the minimum loan is £35, no loan could be made to Mr. John Lynch. The deposit of ten shillings has been retained to meet part of the expenses of the Inspection. I am afraid that I could not recommend any relaxation in the rules for land loans.

THE FLANNAN ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE.

*MR. J. G. WEIR: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he is now in a position to state when the lighthouse on the Flannan Islands, recommended by the Commissioners of Northern Lighthouses, will be commenced.

MR. BRYCE: The estimates of the three general lighthouse authorities for the coming year are now under consideration, and no decision has yet been arrived at. The erection of a light on Flannan Islands is one out of several new works which have in principle been approved; but, in the present condition of the Mercantile Marine Fund, not all of those approved can be undertaken in the coming year.

THE ELECTION OF ASSISTANT OVERSEERS.

MR. M. H. HOLLAND (Salford, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the recent election of an assistant overseer for the township of Broughton, in the Salford Union, to fill a vacancy caused by death; and whether, seeing that prior to the passing of the new Parish Councils Act it would have rested with the Poor Law Guardians to make a suitable appointment under these circumstances, and that the change in the Law has necessitated the revival of an old Act of George III., resulting in two large vestry meetings and a three days' poll with open voting, he will consider the advisability of providing that such appointments should revert to some local authority?

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE: Under Section 33 of the Local Government Act, 1894, the Town Council of the Borough of Salford, in which the township of Broughton is situate, can apply to the Local Government Board for an Order to confer upon them the power of appointing an assistant overseer for the township. If such an Order were issued, the object which my hon. Friend has in view would in future be met.

THE MACROOM AND BALLYVOURNEY RAILWAY.

Dr. TANNER: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention having been directed to the proposed Macroom and Ballyvourney Railway extension, and the unanimous demand for this reproductive public work, the Government are prepared to give any practical facility towards its completion?

Sir J. T. HIBBERT: This project was approved of by the Grand Jury of County Cork at the Summer Assizes of 1889, but a guarantee to aid in the construction of the line was refused by that body. The attention of the Board of Works has not since been called to the subject, except by a report in the Cork papers of about three weeks since of a discussion at the Macroom Board of Guardians, at which the project was stated to be very desirable. I am not aware that the line has been begun. There are no funds at the disposal of the Board of Works or the Treasury for assisting the project.

INDIAN FRONTIER OPERATIONS.

Mr. W. S. CAINE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India what total expenditure has been incurred in the military, political, and transport operations carried on during the last three years beyond the northern frontiers of India, at Gilgit, Hunza, Chitral, and Chilas, and what portion, if any, has been borne by Kashmir; and will any Papers be laid presently upon the Table of the House bearing on the recently-reported disturbances in the Hindu Kush?

Mr. H. H. FOWLER: I can give the House a Return of the expenditure incurred on these frontiers up to the end of 1892–3, but for figures of a later date, and for the expenditure incurred by the Kashmir State, I should have to ask the Government of India. If the hon. Member alludes to the disturbances in Chitral, the information at my disposal is not sufficiently complete to enable me to lay Papers yet before the House.

WOODBURY HILL REFORMATORY.

Mr. J. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: On behalf of the hon. Member for South Birmingham (Mr. Powell Williams), I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the recent outbreak at Woodbury Hill Reformatory; whether he is aware that the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children undertook the defence of the boys who were summoned before the Magistrates; that the schoolmaster of the reformatory admitted that the boys had been kept in a schoolroom from morning till night during the recent severe weather without fire; that some boys were punished by being confined in a cell six feet square, constructed like a shed outside the building, without means of warmth and without bedding, and that when so confined they were without shoes or stockings; whether he is also aware that the reformatory is an old farmhouse with defects of construction such as make it very cold in severe weather; and whether he will cause an inquiry to be made into the whole of the circumstances of the outbreak, and into any cause of complaint which the inmates of the reformatory may have ground to make?

Mr. H. H. ASQUITH: Yes, Sir; my attention was called to the outbreak at the Woodbury Hill Reformatory, and immediate inquiry was made into the circumstances, and two reports have been furnished to me. It is the case that the defence of the boys who were summoned was undertaken by an agent of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. It appeared in evidence that the boys had recently been kept in a schoolroom without fire the whole day, that some boys had been punished by confinement in a cell as described, and in one case a boy's shoes and stockings were taken away. It is not the case that the boys who were confined in the cell were left without bedding and the means of warmth. The buildings are reported to be very defective for the purpose of a reformatory, and the question of closing the school is now under my consideration.

NEW MEMBER SWORN.

Sir Weetman Dickinson Pearson, Baronet, for the Borough of Colchester.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

THE INDIAN COTTON DUTIES.

*SIR H. JAMES (Bury, Lancashire) rose to move the Adjournment of the House, but before he addressed the Chair,—

SIR D. H. MACFARLANE (Argyllshire) interposed on a point of Order, and asked Mr. Speaker's ruling on the question whether the Motion of the right hon. and learned Member was in order.

*MR. SPEAKER: I have not heard the Motion yet.

*SIR H. JAMES: I rise, Sir, to ask permission to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance—namely, the recent imposition of duties on the importation of cotton manufactures into India.

SIR D. MACFARLANE, again rising to a point of Order, asked whether this Motion came within the scope of the Standing Order which permitted Motions for the Adjournment of the House on matters of urgent public importance. This question, he said, might have been discussed on the Address a week ago, and it was, he submitted, no more urgent now than then. What he thought the Standing Order contemplated was, the occurrence of some sudden emergency either in Home or Foreign Affairs, and in support of this view he called attention to a previous ruling of Mr. Speaker, in which it appeared to be laid down that Motions for the Adjournment of the House should be used only for the purpose of "bringing under notice some grievance demanding instant remedy."

*MR. SPEAKER: In my opinion, the ruling to which the hon. Member refers is entirely inapplicable to the present Motion. As I understand, this is an alleged grievance requiring instant remedy.

SIR D. MACFARLANE: Oh!

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Member has asked for my opinion, and I hope he will listen to me with courtesy.

SIR D. MACFARLANE: I beg your pardon, Sir.

*MR. SPEAKER: The last words quoted by the hon. Member bring the case distinctly within the meaning of the point of Order I made formerly, namely,—

> "Action which has been taken or not taken for bringing under notice some grievance demanding instant remedy."

The reason why I objected to the Motion on a former occasion was its vague character and wide scope; this relates to the recent imposition of a duty affecting a particular industry. I have very seldom interfered—only, I think, once. This is a matter alleged to be of urgent public importance. I cannot deny that it is of importance. I cannot deny it is of urgent importance; and, seeing that these duties have been recently imposed, I cannot deny that it is of recent occurrence. Upon all these grounds, therefore, I must say that the right hon. Gentleman is in order. As far as I am concerned, I cannot interfere to prevent his submitting the Motion to learn the pleasure of the House; the House, and the House alone, must judge.

[The pleasure of the House not having been signified, Mr. Speaker called on those Members who supported the Motion to rise in their places, and not less than 40 Members having accordingly risen]

*MR. SPEAKER thereafter called upon—

*SIR HENRY JAMES, who said: I desire, in the first place, to remove a false impression which may possibly exist in relation to this Motion and its object. Some hon. Members may feel that the Motion is raised in the interests of a particular trade, and may, from that point of view, be regarded as hostile to the interests of our great dependency in the East. If such a view be entertained I will do all I can to dispel it. There is no one in the House who will not acknowledge that the House ought to be not only just, but even generous, with regard to the interests of our Indian fellow-subjects. As our Indian fellow-subjects are not directly represented in this House it is our duty to see that their interests are fully protected in any course which the Government or this House shall take. And if that be the view of hon. Members, still more strongly, I believe, is it the opinion entertained by those in whose interests I am speaking to-night—

namely, the Lancashire trades, and especially the textile trades of Lancashire. The prosperity of India represents the prosperity of Lancashire. India is the greatest market of Lancashire, and anything which interferes unduly with the prosperity of our Indian Empire strikes more directly against Lancashire interests and trade than against any other portion of the home country. I can assure the House that those with whom I am associated feel most strongly that they would be acting not only a selfish, but an unpatriotic and suicidal, part if they desired other than full consideration for the interests of India. Lancashire has no desire to see the competition of India inthe text ile industry interfered with. For years the cotton industry of India has been happily growing to a position of prosperity, until it has become a serious competitor with the textile industries of this country. Lancashire has nothing to fear from that competition. It is perfectly willing to enter into the contest with our Indian fellow-subjects; all it asks is, that the race shall be run at level weights. I hope the House will allow me, in a few sentences, to state the position of the different cotton trades in this country and in India. There are three sources from which the raw material, cotton fibre, is derived. There is—firstly, the American cotton, which represents the finer descriptions of yarn. There is — secondly, the Indian cotton, which produces a coarse yarn, and which is used in Indian manufactures. A third market, the Egyptian, has come into existence, which, it is supposed, in the competition of finer goods, is about to play an important part. The House will hear this evening, phrases describing the measure between the finer and coarser description of goods. I am sure my right hon. Friend the Secretary for India, will use the terms below 20's and above 20's. That is represented by the number of hanks to the pound. When the cotton is spun off in hanks the coarser is the heavier, and there are fewer hanks to the pound. The coarser cotton is below 20; but the finer quality is lighter in weight, and runs as high as 60 or 70 hanks to the pound. The condition of the markets may be described very shortly. In early times Great Britain had no competitor in India, and it was not till 1855 that the first mill was opened in Bombay. But from that time to this there has been great progress in the course of the textile trade in India. There has been a growth of mills, spindles, and looms, and the result has been that India has taken almost the whole of the Japan and China trade in yarns from Great Britain, and also manufactures large quantities of piece goods from the yarn, principally for home consumption in India, but also partly for export purposes. I say again that Lancashire does not grudge that increase for a moment, if it is unweighted in the race and is allowed an open market in India. It is only when that free market is denied to the trade of Great Britain and when a specific advantage is given to a competitor, that the trade of Lancashire finds it necessary to make any complaint. This is not a mere matter of wayward complaint. It has always been the contention of Lancashire that the import duty is a dead weight upon its trade. It commenced to make that complaint long ago. I need not weary the House with any historical retrospect, therefore I do not trace the position of these duties. The system of Import Duties commenced under the old East India Company; they were felt to be a burden and they were combated by the veteran Free Traders in this House. The matter was brought to the attention of the House in 1877, when the House passed its condemnation upon these duties, principally because they were, in its opinion protective. The Resolution of July 1877 recited that the Import Duties upon cotton goods, being protective duties, were contrary to sound policy. An advance was made in the next two years. Between 1877-79 there was an alteration made in the levying of the duties. The line was drawn at 30 hanks to the pound, and no duty was imposed below 30. According to my right hon. Friend's view, that was no protective duty, because there was no competition in India above the 30's. India produced no cotton so fine as 30's, and, therefore, as the Indian merchant never came to the "30" market, there was no protective duty at all, it was argued. The

House, in April 1879 passed this Resolution:—

> "That the Indian Import Duties on cotton goods, being unjust alike to the Indian consumer and the English producer, ought to be abolished; and this House accepts the recent reduction of these duties as a step towards their total abolition, to which Her Majesty's Government are pledged."

The House will forgive me if I do not occupy its time by discussing what the effect of a Resolution of the House of Commons may be. The merchants and operatives of Lancashire do not say that that Resolution is positively to determine their rights; they do not say that that Resolution effected a revolution; but —still it recorded a reform—they think that it was an expression of opinion of the House of Commons condemnatory of the duties under circumstances that, I believe the House will see, were much more favourable to their maintenance than those which exist at the present moment. Sir, with the Resolution upon the records of the House the commercial men of Lancashire believed that their position was safe, that no import duties would be imposed in face of it, and that all the perfumes of Araby would not get rid of its effects. I am sure my right hon. Friend shared that view, because in March of last year he said—

> "I would here remark that, when Parliament had, after protracted discussion, arrived at a distinct Resolution as to the policy that ought to be pursued in respect of this duty in India, it would not be open to the Executive Government to take a step reversing that decision without the matter being discussed in this House."

That was the view of my right hon. Friend. He knows full well that the policy which was declared by the Resolution of 1879 when no protection existed, has been reversed, and that without discussion in this House. This is the first time there has been an opportunity of discussing the matter. These duties were imposed during the Recess, they were never submitted to Parliament for its consideration, and their Policy has never been discussed in this House; and I may appeal to my hon. Friend below me (Sir D. Macfarlane), who objected to this Motion this evening, whether it is unreasonable to ask for a discussion of the Policy of the Government which has been the reversal of the opinion of the House. Approaching this question with the fullest consideration for the interests of India, will it not be better that the discussion should take place in the interests of the Government, and of the true and right position to be relatively occupied by the traders of this country and those of India? In 1882, in pursuance of the Policy declared by Parliament, the Duties were entirely abolished, the markets were opened, and under the Free Market system India progressed; her trade increased, driving Lancashire away from the markets of Japan and China; her spindle and looms increased, her yarns were produced in enormous quantities, coming within a fair reach of the trade in yarn carried on by this country. The trade of India all this time was flourishing and increasing, whilst the trade of this country has of late become depressed and each day less profitable; until not only is the position of the capitalist imperilled, but the employment of the operative become more precarious. This was the position when there came the necessity, which every one admitted, of dealing with an Indian deficit. It was not a great deficit, but it was one that it was the duty of the Indian Government to deal with. We had a deficit which, I think, may be almost traced to the fact that the Indian Government thought it right to consider one particular interest. The deplorable fall in the value of the rupee had caused the officials of the Indian Government, particularly those who had their families in this country, to suffer considerable loss of income. The Government had to make up that deficit, and the course taken by the officials was to look round and see how they could best find the means of persuading the Government that they could receive this addition to their superannuations, pensions, pay, and allowances. They had friends in the country. The Bombay industry had become very powerful. The Bombay Millowners' Association was at hand, and the Bombay Millowners' Association held out their hand to the Civil Servants of India and appealed to them for help to start this agitation in India to secure an import duty, and from that import duty to find the means of paying this increase to the superannuations, pensions, pay, and allowances to the Anglo-Indian officials.

The right hon. Gentleman will probably tell you something of Indian opinion. It would be interesting to trace what is meant by that Indian opinion. It is impossible to suppose that a duty which is imposed for revenue purposes only—and which, according to my right hon. friend, will be borne by the consumers, the natives of India—will be borne by the consumers. Is it possible to suppose there could have been any enthusiasm on the part of the consumer, the native of India, that he should be taxed by means of this import duty which, it is said, he has to pay? Of course, nobody wishes to be taxed, and when we are told the natives of India agitated to be taxed in order to meet this deficit, I ask hon. Members to pause for a moment and ask themselves whether that is correct. In expressing this view I rely upon the tale as told very frankly at page 48 of the Blue-book on the Indian Tariff Act and the Cotton Duties. Mr. Mehta, a member of the Legislative Council, said:—

> "But I would appeal to other hon. Members who are officials. The present financial exigency is owing not a little to the services having secured exchange compensation. They joined the Indians in agitation for the imposition of duties of cotton imports for the purpose of meeting the deficit largely due to exchange compensation. If after having secured such imposition they would refuse to support the moderate amendment of Mr. Fazulbhai—"

another native member of the Council—

> "to succour a native industry from being harassed and burdened, they would be open to the suspicion that their coaxing tones to induce the natives to join in the agitation against Manchester were suspiciously akin to the interested seductions—made familiar by Dickens—of 'Codlin's the friend, not Short.'"

I may be wrong, but as this statement has not, as far as I know, been contradicted, I assume it to be correct. Now, I ask any Member of this House, is it unreasonable that, when this agitation has been proceeding against Manchester, Manchester should ask at least to be heard here in the matter? This agitation has been carried on against Manchester, against the trade that has been lost by the fall in the value of the rupee more than any other interest of the country. But whilst this agitation has been carried on against Manchester, are we to be told it would be unpatriotic on the part of Manchester to ask permission to state their case to the House? I am very much afraid my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, with the very best intention in the world, has been misled by someone. He is the Indian Minister. He is surrounded by Indian officials, whose duty they may feel is to think only of the interest of India. My right hon. Friend has heard all the representations and numerous memorials from the Bombay mill-owners and the Chamber of Commerce of Bombay. He has listened to every one of the statements that could be brought before him on the part of those who agitated against Manchester. I may say the feeling on the part of Lancashire is that my right hon. Friend always bore in mind he was the Indian Minister only, and never thought he was a British Minister also, and a representative of British interests. The policy of imposing these duties came before the Minister in August of last year, and he gave his decision upon the subject in December. He had since these many representations received the report of Mr. Westland, the Minister who, when he obtained information, went to the mill-owners of Bombay and obtained the information that was to guide the Legislative Council of India, from the representatives of the Bombay trades. All these views my right hon. Friend had before him. They represented one view of the matter. Now, I ask my right hon. Friend, with whom did he take counsel on behalf of Lancashire? There has been a practice in these matters. Ministers in the position of my right hon. Friend have consulted such bodies as the Manchester Chamber of Commerce; they have consulted men on whose judgment they could well rely, and I now respectfully, if it is not unduly inquisitive, ask my right hon. Friend with whom did he consult and learn practically—for there is an immense amount of practical knowledge required—with whom did he consult in order to obtain information as to how far the course he was about to pursue would injure the Lancashire trade? Were those interests considered at all? They could not be considered practically or even theoretically by any Indian Minister without an appeal to practical men having practical knowledge of the subject. I must tell my right hon. Friend there is a feeling in Lancashire that he did not consult any one of those practical merchants or manufacturers with a knowledge of the subject, and there is a feeling at the present moment—a feeling which I hope will be removed by the statement of my right hon. Friend—that their interests were neglected, and that the agitation against Manchester proceeded without those interests ever being heard on their own behalf. If this be the case —I hope it is not—will not my right hon. Friend on reflection feel that it would have been well for him if he had taken advice from practical men and learned the effect of his policy upon the markets of this country? I see the Financial Secretary to the Treasury present. I wish my right hon. Friend had asked the Member for Oldham, in his capacity as the representative of that place, what he, with his great knowledge, thought of this matter. Did he consult the Financial Secretary to the Treasury? Did he consult any one in a similiar position, or did he not, as Lancashire thinks at the present moment, seek guidance alone from those who represent Indian interests without sufficiently considering the interests of this country? I hope it is not too much to say, on behalf of those who desire most strenuously to see Indian interests always considered, that it is not unreasonable that those interests should be considered with some regard to British interests also. There is no necessity why they should ever be opposed one to the other. Apparently that course has not been taken, hence the feeling which exists in Lancashire; a feeling which is of the strongest kind. I have now simply to point out to the House what it is my right hon. Friend has done. He has yielded to the Indian representations; the agitation against Manchester has succeeded. My right hon Friend, I quite admit, deducted somewhat from the demands made upon him, but if Mr. Mehta is correct, the Anglo Indians asked for a 5 per cent. Import Duty, and in that respect were comrades of the Bombay millowners. Now, all British yarns, British manufactured goods, go into India with an import duty of 5 per cent. upon them. I take that duty as if there were no competition or as if there were full countervailing duties against it. But an import duty alone is detrimental to trade, is an obstacle to trade, and there can be no one I should think, in this House who would feel that perhaps, more strongly than my right hon. Friend himself, and those supporters of his who are sincere free-traders. They have a desire to see markets opened, they have preached to the nations of the world the desirability that all markets should be open and there must be some amongst my right hon. Friend's own supporters who will feel with regret that our position when we appeal to protective countries is weakened by the act which has taken place. It may be an act of necessity, but when next we preach the doctrine to Germany or to France, or to our Colonies that Import Duties are an evil in themselves and ought not to be imposed, the answer will come to us—

> "Why look at home; your Imperial Parliament has sanctioned an Import Duty; under these circumstances how can you preach to us the folly of protection and the virtue of free trade?"

There are some veterans in this House who have not forgotten the Free Trade struggles of 50 years ago, and they will recall the days when they fought for open markets. I think there may possibly be some to-night who will regret that this Import Duty has been imposed, but, Sir, I am not about to say that there is not the possibility of an Import Duty being justified under some circumstances. Yet, Sir, I hope I shall have the sanction of the House to the proposition that these Import Duties ought not to be imposed without their absolute necessity being proved to the very hilt. The imposition of Import Duties produces dislocation of trade and unsettlement of trade, and, of course, the burden must be borne by some one. My right hon. Friend will, no doubt, say that the Indian consumer will bear that burden; but in what sense will he bear it? The Indian consumer will not have more money to spend because you impose this Import Duty on British goods. He will have only the same amount of money to spend on cotton goods. Indeed, having this 5 per cent. duty to pay, or a charge of a farthing in the pound weight more on the goods, the Indian consumer will have less to spend. Therefore there will be so much the less in the volume of goods bought, and, the English manufacturer producing so much less and receiving so much less for what he produces, the burden falls on him. It may be said that *prima facie* the Indian consumer does pay the Import Duty. Of course the consignee of the English manufacturer has to pay the Import Duty, and he must try to get repayment in some way, and he may get some of it from the Indian consumer. But he may be beaten, as I will show later on, by his Indian competitor in the manufacture of the goods. At best the British producer stands only a chance of receiving the Import Duty back, and until he knows whether the market will bear an increased price or not the trade becomes an uncertain and unreliable trade to him. But my right hon. Friend, having been brought to his present state of mind, and having decided to impose those Duties in face of the Resolution of the House in 1879, and without consulting any person practically connected with the Lancashire trade, says—

> "I will protect the Lancashire manufacturers themselves by putting an Excise Internal Duty upon the production of the Indian merchant; by putting this Excise Duty upon the product of the Indian merchant I will burden him as I have burdened the British importer."

But those who have a practical knowledge of the subject say that this countervailing Duty is no protection to the British producer; that it fails entirely to counteract the Import Duty, and that, in consequence of the fallacy of my right hon. Friend, the British producer will have to trade under a system of protection—protection for the Indian producer and protection against the Lancashire producer. For the imposition of that Excise Duty my right hon. Friend selected 20's—that is 20 hanks to the pound—so he relieves the Indian producer from all Excise Duty on everything below 20's. But he has done more. He says to the Indian producer—

> "I will put the tax, not on your produced goods; I will put it on the yarn."

The yarn, of course, is spun into gray cloth, bleached, coloured, and printed. These different processes represent material and labour. The Import Duty is placed on the British goods as they are landed, and, therefore, all the processes I have mentioned are taxed. But in the case of the Indian competitor the yarn only is taxed, and the result of the system is—that the difference between the tax on the yarn, and the tax on the ultimate material, is as 60 to 100. Therefore, the Indian producer pays a 3 per cent. tax as compared with the tax of 5 per cent. on the Lancashire producer. That, surely, cannot be a countervailing duty. But I am aware my right hon. Friend will say that it would be inconvenient to put the Excise Tax on piece goods, because it was impossible to get any return of these goods from the Indian manufacturers. But the Government officials could go to the Indian manufacturers and say, "Give us an estimate of what you produce." You could then impose a 5 per cent. Excise Duty on that estimate, which would correspond with the 5 per cent. imported duty put on Lancashire goods. And this is what my right hon. Friend calls "perfect equality" as between the Indian and the Lancashire producer. The Indian manufacturer pays 3 per cent. duty as compared with the 5 per cent. duty paid by the British manufacturer. I have mentioned that Indian goods below 20's are free of this Excise Duty. The Indian manufacturer has therefore got, to use a well-known phrase "a pull" against the British manufacturer, and it is "a pull" of the most important character. I am told that if you manufacture goods at 20's and if you manufacture goods at 22's, no unskilled person can tell the difference. These two classes of goods can only be distinguished by persons possessed of the most expert knowledge of the trade. What then is the position of the two competitors in the market? The Indian producer is enabled to produce this 20's material at 3d. The British producer turns out 22's, say, at an equal price. It would be a fraction dearer. But he has to pay a farthing import duty on the pound, and it, therefore, costs him 3¼d. in the pound. The Indian producer therefore goes into the market and says:—

> "I have here some goods; they are as good as any of the English goods; you cannot tell the difference between them; and if the English producer charges you 3¼d. a pound for his goods you can have these at 3d. or 3⅛d. a pound."

If you increase the price of one quality of goods and lessen another, there is naturally protection for the cheaper.

The English producer is therefore driven out of the market and has no chance of success. I ask the House, is not that a matter for consideration — a matter upon which my right hon. Friend should have allowed discussion by those practically interested before coming to a final decision? Of course my right hon. Friend says that these two duties are equal and corresponding. But I have been assured by those who have the most practical knowledge of the subject that there is this great difference between them, and that the great competition I have described will be certain to take place—always to the advantage of the untaxed competitor, always to the disadvantage of the taxed competitor. And if we fear at the present time, there is far greater fear for the future. There is this in connection with the markets which causes men engaged in the trade to fell the gravest anxiety. Our principal supplies of raw material come from America. British manufacturers pay low prices—far lower prices for that material than was formerly paid for them. I believe prices are lower than ever they were in the history of the trade. Where formerly India had no fine cotton at her disposal, she can now pay for the American cotton at a price which will enable her to compete in these finer qualities. She will therefore come into the market competing in these goods with a differential duty of 2 per cent., and she is laying out her mills for the purpose of using these qualities of cotton and competing with the British trade. It is no answer to say, "Oh, wait till competition develops itself." These Duties cannot be changed, and a fresh burden thrown on the consumer, lightly, they ought to be settled for good. The Government have made an exemption from the Import Duty so as to allow all machinery to go in free, and the organisation of Bombay millowners is erecting mills which will be able to produce the finer material from the American cotton, with an acknowledged advantage to the extent of the 2 per cent. duty. Hitherto it is quite true that the Lancashire manufacturer has not competed to a very great extent in cottons below 20's. But as prices have altered, and as his profits have been less and less every year, he has had to look after new markets, and he is producing them now, and, in a fair field, he can send them to compete in India. But goods above 20's are now being produced at many mills in India, and the Lancashire manufacturer will be driven out of the market by the 5 per cent. Duty. You ask me what effect I can show to have been produced. The time has been short yet, for Lancashire has made her protest as quickly as possible. India has been progressing and progressing with great power, and has arrived at a wonderful result. From the day when the first cotton mills were erected in Bombay (in 1855) mills have continued to spring into existence, till now there are 141 cotton mills in India. In 1882 there were 1,550,000 spindles in India, and now there are 3,500,000 spindles. The result is that India is producing 170,000,000 lb. of yarn against the 40,000,000 lb. of British yarns which goes into India. Whilst India has been progressing, how has the British trade been prospering? According to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, you have only to look at the volume of trade, and not at the prices. I will not enter upon that question as a whole now, but I will ask my right hon. Friend to consider whether there is not a point beyond which a fall in prices becomes a calamity. You may say to the agriculturist that he is producing a necessary of which every man is a consumer, and that the consumer gets his produce cheaply is a fact to be gloried in. But does my right hon. Friend carry that doctrine to the full extent? This country is a great producing country, and its export trade represents about 200 millions of money. Would my right hon. Friend wish to see a fall in prices in all trades such as would reduce that 200 millions of trade to only 120 millions? In some trades there must be a line below which it is not desirable that prices should fall. The agriculturist is a passive sufferer. He must hold his land; he cannot shut it up even if he does not receive his rent, though in some cases the land has gone out of cultivation. But when the millowner is paying from £500 to £1,000 a week in wages, if he does not get that back you cannot expect him to carry on his mill. In respect of this export trade with foreign nations, my right hon. Friend's joy over falling prices is not shared by the capitalist who is losing his capital, and it is not shared by the men who are shrewd enough to know that if the fall continues it must mean the closing of the mills and a vast addition to the already swollen ranks of the unemployed. I have spoken with great satisfaction of the increasing prosperity of the textile trade in India. I wish I could speak in the same way of the textile trade in Lancashire. Say what you will, that trade was never so depressed as it is to-day. The volume of trade represents nothing to men who are selling their goods at a loss, and there is much astonishment at the speech of the hon, Member for the Leigh Division (Mr. Caleb Wright) the other day. The hon. Member said that Lancashire never was as prosperous as it is to-day, and that he had more money than he knew what to do with. I understand that he is or was engaged in a trade of a very peculiar character, and of a very high degree of fineness. He has no Indian trade, and he knows nothing about it. But there are people in Lancashire who have already suffered from the effect of this duty in India. There are some 20,000 looms in Blackburn idle at present on account of this policy, and what does that represent? It means 7,000 persons unemployed. Does the Chancellor of the Exchequer exult over that fact? This closing of mills is progressing, and Lancashire Members will tell you that the greatest alarm is spreading lest what has occurred in Blackburn should occur elsewhere. It is said that the mill-owners of Lancashire have not made any returns. But we have returns from some public companies. In the neighbourhood of Oldham there is a congeries of 93 mills of which we have the returns. They have a share capital of £3,874,000, and a loan capital of £3,330,000, and while the shareholders have been paying interest on the loan capital at 4½ per cent., the mills for the last three years have been working at a loss. In 1892 the loss was £101,000, in 1893 it was £72,767, but in 1894 the loss fell to £15,000; but that was in the early part of the year only, and since then the loss has been going on increasing. Where is this to end? Is this trade in a condition in which you can impose an artificial burden on it gratuitously? With these losses growing, and with this further burden, do not you think the time is coming when the mills will not be kept open? The Indian trade has shown us an example. That trade in yarns with China and Japan increased to an enormous extent. In the six years ending 1882 England had two-thirds of the trade with China, Hongkong, and Japan; but in the four years ending 1894 England has only one-fifth of that trade, and India has four-fifths. In the last year, 1893, that Indian trade fell off from the large figure which it had reached, but the Indian traders would not bear that loss patiently. They asked for a benefit to recoup them for the fall in the rupee. The trade in Lancashire has taken no such step, but has borne the fall in the price of the rupee patiently. It has never been with them a matter of agitation, and now all they ask is that a reason should be given for this additional burden being placed on them. I hope that the House understands how the fall affects the English producer. There has been a fall in prices from two causes. The rupee value of goods fell in India partly on account of competition, and that could be borne by the producer. Then came the fall in exchange, aggravated by the fatal step of closing of the mints, and in a few years prices have diminished to the extent of 70 per cent. on piece goods and 59 per cent. on yarns. Some portion of that loss was recouped by the great fall in the price of raw material; but it was not enough to compensate the producer for the double loss. The question is whether he can bear it, and whether or not it is a Duty which will have the effect of bringing industrial enterprise to an end. It may be that my right hon. Friend will say—"What is the policy which you propose?" That is asking me to bear a grave responsibility. I do not put forward an alternative policy, because I do not know enough of India; but there are those connected with India who say that there are sources of taxation that might afford equally good results with less injustice than by the imposition of those Duties. In the first place, if India needs financial relief, this country as a whole should bear it. I appeal, however, to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to note that there is many a rich man in India who bears less taxation than the rich man in this country. What, does my right hon. Friend say to a well regulated Income Tax? What a magnificent field there is for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to bring within the scope of his measures the wealthy Indian, with his hoards of silver and gold. What a fine scope there is for the application of the graduated Death Duties to those native Princes with their hoards of precious metals, and what an opportunity there is provided here to relieve the poor consumer in India of this taxation which we have imposed upon him by the Import Duties. I suggest these two points to the consideration of my right hon. Friend. I have had an important duty to face in representing this great interest in the House. It was the wish of those whom I and other hon. Gentlemen represent to have their view stated with the fullest moderation. I hope I have succeeded; at least, that has been the intention in my mind. On behalf of this great industry, I express the hope that the last words of my right hon. Friend have not been spoken. If, however, it should turn out that his last words have been spoken, then I must say that I am afraid the last words of Lancashire have not been spoken. There cannot be an end to this question as it remains at present. There must be many loyal supporters of the Government who know how deep and true is the feeling in Lancashire on this question; and they can tell the Secretary of State for India that the demands they make upon him this evening are not the demands of capital asking for the retention of inflated profits, or an attempt to secure great gains. On the contrary, they will tell him that this is a universal demand from the humblest men in Lancashire engaged in the trade whose prosperity is thus threatened, fearful of a time, perhaps not far remote, when the streets of busy Lancashire towns may be deserted, when mills may be closed and looms silent, and when they will search in vain for means to earn their daily bread. The right hon. Gentleman concluded by moving the Adjournment of the House.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (MR. H. H. FOWLER, Wolverhampton, E.): I agree with my right hon. Friend that it is for the public interest that this question should be brought under the consideration of the House. I think the time has arrived when a clear statement of the facts of the case should be made in the presence of what, after all, is the supreme tribunal of this country. Misrepresentation has been circulated not only in England, but also in India, and therefore on that account, while asking this House to deal with this question as a whole, I will not simply confine myself to that one aspect of the case which my right hon. Friend has submitted to the House. Before, however, I enter upon the further discussion of this question I should like to say one word in self-defence, and, what is far more important, a word in defence of those with whom I am associated in England and in India, and upon whom my right hon. Friend has poured what I may call his eloquent scorn. My right hon. Friend has spoken of the Anglo-Indian officials, some of the most distinguished servants of the Crown both in England and in India. He has spoken of agitators in India to whose blandishments I have succumbed. I shall tell the House before I finish what has been the part that has been taken in India on this question, but I cannot allow another moment to elapse without repudiating, and repudiating in the strongest terms, that there has been any agitation, any conspiracy, on behalf of any class in India in order to deal with this financial difficulty. You might as well charge the Chancellor of the Exchequer with entering into some combination—I care not on which side of the House the view is taken—with interested classes when he submits his financial proposals. Perhaps my right hon. Friend is not aware that the distinguished man who is at present Finance Minister in India is a man of the highest standing and of the most unblemished reputation, a man who has served the Crown for a long period of years, and who has received a signal mark of favour from the Crown for his great public services. My right hon. Friend described him as an agitator in combination with a certain class of officials who want to raise their own salaries, and that he has submitted proposals, not to me in England, but to the Legislative Council of India, while the Viceroy whom my right hon. Friend has chiefly attacked is Lord Lansdowne, who ruled India with such success for a period of five years. Are we to regard men of that character and class men who have by their deeds shown that they take the deepest interest in the welfare of India—described as entering into a combination with Anglo-Indian Officials, agitating against Manchester, and bringing to bear certain influences on the Secretary of State in order to join in that conspiracy?

*SIR H. JAMES: I never said anything of the sort. I read out the statement of Mr. Mehta to which reference was made; I quoted his words, on which alone I relied, but I never referred to Lord Lansdowne.

*MR. H. H. FOWLER: There was, however, an expression which my right hon. Friend used with reference to myself. He did not mean it as a compliment, but I accept it as the greatest compliment. He told the House that I am only an Indian Minister. Yes, that is the post I fill. It is to India that I am responsible as well as to this House, and when my right hon. Friend charges me with sacrificing the interests of England to the interests of India, he will need very satisfactory proof. He has not given that proof in the course of his speech; but I will show my right hon. Friend that the censures upon me in India are quite as severe as the censures upon me in Lancashire. One of the leading organs of public opinion in Lancashire stated that—

"the conspiracy of the Indian Service, the Indian cotton trade, and Mr. Fowler had succeeded."

About the same date there comes from India a statement

"that the sacrifice of Indian interests is the principle underlying this measure, and it is a principle to which a Radical Secretary of State has given his *imprimatur*."

Further, I observe that it has been stated—not, perhaps, in a very influential quarter in India—that I should be called

"the Secretary of State for Lancashire, not the Secretary of State for India."

That emboldens me to go on with my argument; for, having shown the House that I am attacked from two different points of the compass, it is impossible for both to be true; I cannot have sacrificed Lancashire to India, and I cannot at the same time have sacrificed India to Lancashire. I have endeavoured in dealing, not with my own financial proposals, but with the financial proposals of the Government of India, to steer an even keel and to do what I thought was fair justice to the interests of Lancashire and the interests of India. It is not possible to thoroughly understand this question without, in two or three sentences, considering its history. My right hon. Friend gave the House a short but an interesting account of the various stages through which this question had passed; but I think he omitted one or two points, to which it is my duty to call attention, in order that the House may quite understand that this is not a novel proposal on the part of the Government of India, but that Duties upon Cotton Imports have been imposed, with a short interval, not only during the time of the East India Company, but ever since the Government of India was handed over to the Crown. Originally these Duties were of a protective character, and were, as now, 5 per cent.; they were raised at one time to 10 per cent.; there were various reductions down to the period to which my right hon. Friend has alluded, when what I may call the agitation in this House against the Indian Cotton Duties commenced, which soon assumed a substantial and real form. These Duties were attacked entirely on the ground of their protective character. That was the ground taken by one of the ablest of Lancashire Cotton Spinners, who was subsequently Under Secretary for India, and whose death we all deplore—Mr. J. K. Cross. He made one of the earliest speeches on this question, and he attacked these Duties solely on the ground of there being no Excise Duties in India, but simply Import Duties on cotton goods imported. My right hon. Friend spoke of the part taken by stalwart Free Traders with reference to these Duties; but at that time there were differences of opinion about them amongst the most stalwart Free Traders. No one will question that the late Mr. Fawcett was one of the soundest and wisest of Free Traders who ever spoke on this subject; and he made in this House a speech which I may quote all the more readily because I have not pursued, and the Government are not pursuing the policy he recommended. I want this House to see how this question then affected the mind of a Member who had taken the deepest interest in Indian affairs, and who was himself a most pronounced Free Trader. He said—

> "Frequent references have been made in this Debate to the principles of political economy. If the House were to take the abstract principles of that science and apply them cut and dried without considering the social and political circumstances of the case they would act more like pedants than politicians and might produce an amount of discontent in India which would seriously imperil the integrity of the Empire."

This is the sentence I want to draw special attention to:—

> "Statesmen must consider, not merely whether a particular tax is theoretically bad, but whether it creates discontent amongst the people, and looking at the question in that light he asserted that there was no single tax levied in India which was so satisfactory to the people of that country as a revenue raised by Import Duties."

My right hon. Friend alluded to the Debate of 1877, and to the Resolution then passed; but he was significantly silent with reference to an important Amendment to that Resolution which was proposed by the noble Lord the late First Lord of the Admiralty, who then represented the India Office in this House, the noble Lord the Member for Middlesex (Lord George Hamilton). The noble Lord would not accept that Resolution—namely—

> "That the Duties were protective in their character, contrary to sound commercial policy, and ought to be repealed without delay."

without this addition—

> "as soon as the financial condition of India will permit."

That is the crux of the situation; that was the condition on which the House passed the Resolution. The House did not then repeal the Duties. My right hon. Friend would have led anyone to assume that, in consequence of that Resolution, the Duties were forthwith repealed. He said that the merchants, manufacturers and mill-owners made their arrangements on the faith of that Resolution of the House. That is not the case. The Import Duties were not repealed till 1882; and they were not repealed because they were Duties upon cotton goods, but they were repealed, because at that time the financial condition of India allowed of the repeal of all Import Duties. The arguments used in that Debate had mainly reference to the coarser counts of which my right hon. Friend spoke. This is a point on which stress has to be aid, as it has a bearing upon the present condition of affairs; it was pressed in the Debate as it had been in Lord Salisbury's Despatches of 1874 and 1875. Mr. Sidebottom, who spoke for the cotton trade, said—

> "We have already lost our trade in the coarser goods, which can be supplied more cheaply by Indian manufacturers."

In a subsequent Debate Mr. Briggs stated that—

> "the coarser goods were once sent from this country, but that that trade had disappeared because the duties were repealed too late."

The argument used in 1875, 1877, and 1879 was just the same argument my right hon. Friend has used to-night——namely, that the existence of that Duty had prevented Manchester or Lancashire from making the coarser counts, and that, if the Duties were repealed, the coarser counts would be manufactured and trade would revive. I will give statistics which will show how that view has been carried out. Fourteen years have elapsed since those Duties were repealed. The trade in the coarser counts has decreased, and decreased, and decreased, until it has reached the vanishing point; and there has been no protection on one side or the other, but there has been a free and open market. My right hon. Friend cited lugubrious figures as to the decrease of the cotton trade in India during the last few years. I can only tell him that in 1887–88 the value of British cotton piece goods imported into India was Rx.23,324,000; in 1892–3 it was Rx.22,127,000; and in 1893–4, which he has described as a period of unparalleled depression, it reached Rx.28,319,000. We then come to the period with which he has dealt, the period of the Budget of 1894, when the Government of India and the Government of Great Britain were face to face with what I have described as the financial condition of India. He asks, "Why had you to put these Duties on?" And he gave a certain explanation; I know where he got it from; he stated that salaries had been increased and that a deficit had been created in India which would not have existed under other circumstances. That is not the case. When the Budget of 1894–5 was under discussion the value of the rupee stood at 1s. 2d., and the year that has passed has reduced that value to something like 1s. 1d.—a difference in the financial position which was not contemplated 12 months ago. That fall in exchange will represent at the present time an addition of Rx.2,500,000 to the Indian expenditure. Take the figures we had before us when we came to consider the financial position. The net difference in the exchange value—that is, the net loss on exchange in respect to our sterling remittances as between the year 1878 and the year 1894—represents no less a sum than Rx.10,253,000, and the loss this year is Rx.12,753,000. Therefore the Government were face to face with a very difficult and serious financial question; and what was proposed? The Government of India estimated a deficit of Rx.3,000,000, and that deficit they proposed to meet by imposing Import Duties. I am not aware of any of the agitation spoken of, of any pressure brought to bear in India upon England. I know that Lord Kimberley was at the head of the Indian Office and Lord Lansdowne was Viceroy, and their communications took place by telegram. I have read these telegrams over and over again, and I can say that they had reference exclusively to the financial exigencies of the case. The Government of India asked for permission to impose Cotton Duties, and the Home Government provisionally declined. The result of that refusal was that the Famine Appropriation Fund was suspended, that grants to the provincial Governments were curtailed, and contributions were raised from the provincial rates; and ultimately the Finance Minister of India budgeted for a deficit of only Rx.300,000. What was said by Lord Kimberley in reply to the protestations of the Government of India against the refusal to sanction the putting of Import Duties upon Cotton? He said this:—

> "If, after an interval, sufficient to judge of the financial position as affected by the Tariff Act, by the course of exchange, and by other circumstances, there was not an improvement, Her Majesty's Government would be prepared to receive further representations from the Government of India on the subject of imposing the Import Duties upon Cotton Manufactures."

After Lord Kimberley left the India Office I had to face this question. My right hon. Friend has somewhat imputed to me a breach of faith with the House upon that point, and I am sensitive to any charge of that character. I stated my own view within 24 hours of my appointment, in reply to the hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite. I then said there was no Opposition to the imposition of these duties if they were met by corresponding Excise duties. But I added if there was anything of a proctective character involved I should not think them proper duties to be imposed without a preliminary discussion in the House of Commons.

I wrote a despatch to the Government of India in which I clearly pointed out that we would not be parties to duties which were protective, but that if they could suggest a mode by which every element of protection could be removed we would accept their proposal. On July 27 one of the Members for Manchester put to me the question whether, in view of the Resolution passed on July 1, 1877, with reference to Indian Import Duties on cotton goods, I could give an assurance that such duties would not be imposed without an opportunity being given to the House of expressing an opinion on the subject. I replied that the Resolution of the House to which the hon. Baronet (Sir W. H. Houldsworth) referred dealt with Duties that were protective in their nature, and I had already stated that in my opinion the Executive Government ought not to sanction steps that would reverse that decision without giving an opportunity for discussion in that House. The imposition of Duties which would not be protective in their character are not affected by that Resolution. That makes my own position perfectly clear. In the Indian Budget debate of 1894 I dwelt on the case at great length. I then made the distinct declaration that I was in favour of complying with the request of the Indian Council if the element of Protection could be removed.

SIR W. H. HOULDSWORTH (Manchester, N.W.): I drew the right hon. Gentleman's attention later to a subsequent resolution passed in 1879.

*MR. H. H. FOWLER: Yes, but a good deal happened during the course of last Session. There was a very interesting discussion on this question in the House of Lords, when there were present two ex-Viceroys of India, an ex-Secretary of State, and a distinguished soldier who had spent 40 years of his life in India, and who had been Commander of the Forces there for a long time. These noble Lords called attention to a point which my right hon. Friend has not alluded to to-night, a point which no Government can ignore and which I am sure this House will not ignore—namely, the political difficulty which has arisen in India with reference to this question. Lord Lansdowne, who is not an Anglo-Indian Official agitator, said :-

> "There has never been a moment when it was more necessary to counteract the impression that our financial policy in India is dictated by selfish considerations. I am not one of those who regard with exaggerated alarm every bazaar rumour which may be telegraphed over to this country from India, but it is idle to conceal from ourselves that many causes are at work which should make us pause before we do anything to shake the confidence of the people of India in the absolute disinterestedness of our rule. Western ideas are spreading with rapidity in the minds of an Eastern population not yet by any means fitted to receive them. The Government must make up its mind to be misrepresented, and may in ordinary cases console itself with the hope that the truth will prevail. But it should think twice before it supplies the party of agitation with a real grievance and the materials for an indictment to which no reply has been made because no reply is possible. It is a gross libel to say that either of the great political parties in this country will, for the sake of a passing advantage, deny to the people of India the fair play which they expect."

Lord Roberts approached this subject not as a financier, for he did not pretend to be one, but as a man who knew something of the political condition of India, and no Government could disregard warnings from a quarter like that. He said :—

> "While as a soldier he believed that the prosperity of India depended on the maintenance of our naval and military supremacy, he would say, as an Englishman who had lived more than 40 years in that country, that he knew it depended to even a greater extent on the contentment of the people and their belief in the advantages of British rule. The extraordinary position we occupied in India was mainly due to the Natives' firm reliance on our integrity and honesty of purpose, and determination to do what was right and best for them. If this feeling were once destroyed the consequences would be disastrous."

But there was a still more important speech, from a political point of view, delivered in the House of Lords by one whom we all recollect as a Member of this House for many years, and as a Lancashire Member, too, who had himself been Secretary of State for India for six years. What did Lord Cross say—and, Mr. Speaker, this is the last public deliverance of an official leader of the Conservative party on this question? He said :-

> "All I desire to add, and I have always said so, with regard to the affairs of India, is that this is no party question whatever. It is a question that must be decided by the Government of the day. It is for them to say whether the course hitherto adopted should be persisted in or not. They have the information to enable them to judge. Do the Government believe that without reimposing these Duties the Indian finances could not be properly balanced? If they do, there is an end to the question. If not, are the Duties not to be reimposed simply because of some kind of fad about Free Trade which ought not to enter into the discussion between England and India. If the Government can see no other way of balancing the finances of India, they must at the proper time reconsider the question of reimposing the Duties on cotton."

Now, I have cleared the way as to what I said to the House I was prepared to do if the protective element could be destroyed—because we do not share that opinion about it being a fad about Free Trade—we believe it to be a reality and a principle to which we are prepared to adhere. We put ourselves in communication with the Government of India. My right hon. Friend has not quoted or in any way replied to the very able minute of Sir James Westland, the bulk of which I have laid on the Table. But I will sum up what that minute says. Sir James Westland says that the Indian cotton mills do not spin yarns of a higher count than 30's. My right hon. Friend has practically admitted this limit, though he thinks it may be extended in the future. At any rate, at present they do not extend it, and that is proved by these facts. There are 141 mills in India, and 140 of these mills furnish statistics to the Finance Minister. Those mills spun last year 373 million pounds of yarn, of which 215 millions were spun at Bombay, which justifies one in regarding that city as the chief seat of the Indian cotton trade. Close on 20 per cent. were 10's, and 59·63 were above 10's and under 20's. Therefore you have 79½ per cent. of the whole goods spun in the Indian mills under 20's. Above 20's and under 30's there was 19 per cent. Therefore you have, very much bearing out what was stated by Sir James Westland, 98½ per cent. of goods spun in India under 30's and only a small quantity above 30's—that small quantity on which this competition is going to arise—namely, 1½ per cent. Why do the Indian mills spin the coarser counts? The reason, according to Sir J. Westland, is the Indian cotton does not give a sufficient length of fibre for the higher counts; and the accuracy of these statements is confirmed by statistics furnished by the Collector of Customs at Bombay, who says, that the export from Bombay of Indian spun yarn above 24's is not ½ per cent. of the whole amount. Therefore Sir J. Westland was justified in maintaining that the industry of India is chiefly concerned with the coarser qualities and that of Lancashire with the finer qualities, and that unless they approach something like overlapping lines there is nothing like a competition between them. What becomes of the imported yarns? They are used for hand-loom weaving; the mills take none of them. I wonder if my right hon. Friend is aware that an enormous number of looms which in India weave yarns for piece goods are in cottage homes. The idea of imposing an Excise Duty on cottage industries throughout the length and breadth of India is utterly impracticable. What is the position of these yarns? The House has already been told that the consumption is 373,000,000, of which 170,000,000 was exported, no doubt forming a part of the trade to which my right hon. Friend has alluded, but all in the coarser counts. No duty affects them; no competition arises there; and on Lancashlre no duty is imposed. There are 129,000,000 used for this hand-loom weaving of the coarser quality for the benefit of the native population of the poorest character, and

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only 74,000,000 is used by the mills. I have means of communicating with quite as competent advisers in Lancashire, perhaps, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Bury has. [Sir H. JAMES: "Name!"] I am not going to disclose the Gentlemen's names. My right hon. Friend is surely not the man to make a demand of that kind. Did he think it was fair game to suggest that I, an ignorant man, knowing nothing of the cotton trade, would dare proceed to deal with this difficult and delicate question in an autocratic spirit without consulting anybody? That is not the way in which I discharge the duty of my post. I have information—it may be sound or unsound; but, at all events, I have been guided by that information. The result of the position was that when the Indian Government proposed an Import Duty of 3½ per cent. on yarns and 5 per cent. on piece goods, my advisers were of opinion that we must have a uniform duty both on yarns and piece goods; and it is a very singular thing that the Indian argument was exactly the converse of that used by my right hon. Friend. His argument is, that the duty you impose is only 3 per cent. on the Indian manufacturer, whereas you impose a duty of 5 per cent. on the Lancashire manufacturer. What the Indian people said was, that to put a uniform duty of 5 per cent. was practically charging them with 1½ per cent. more than the Lancashire manufacturer. At any rate, that is the ground they took up. They gave reasons for that ground—namely, the position of their mills, the cost of the machinery, the cost of imported coal, and the duty they paid upon imported stores and materials. I did not accept that position, but I required that there should be a uniform duty of 5 per cent. all round, which, I think is a sound, financial principle. I need not trouble the House with any statement of the effect produced in India in reference to this modified proposal. I do not know whether hon. Gentlemen have read the Debates in the Indian Legislative Council upon this question. My right hon. Friend quoted some criticisms of a Member of the Council, but he did not quote the replies to those criticisms from other Members, nor did he quote the very able arguments used by distinguished Anglo-Indians and more distinguished natives against the imposition of Excise Duties at all. The Excise Duty they were willing to accept was down at a limit of 24's, but I stood to my guns and put the limit at 20's, and that was carried by a majority of one. Having taken a view of the whole position, I will now endeavour to deal with the three main objections which were set forth in my right hon. Friend's speech, and which I gathered to be the objections that Lancashire takes on this question. The first objection is, that we have violated the principles of Free Trade; the second objection is, that we have imposed a heavy burden on Lancashire; and the third, that the Excise Duty is inadequate for the purposes of preventing protection. On the other hand, my Indian friends say to me that it is far below the limit at which any effective competition begins, and, so far as they are concerned, is too oppressive. It is said that we have violated the principles of Free Trade. My right hon. Friend the Member for Bury made in his speech an attack upon the Government with reference to our preaching to foreign nations, but he very dexterously inserted into his argument a change of one of the factors. He said "Import Duties," but Import Duties and Protective Duties are not the same thing, they are totally distinct. There is no principle of free trade which has been violated by the imposition of an Import Duty unless protection accompanies it. The abolition of a Customs Duty may be very desirable or not, but we have never recommended foreign countries to abolish Customs Duties; we have recommended foreign countries to abolish protective duties, which is quite a different thing. What did Cobden himself say? Surely my Lancashire Friends will accept what Cobden said as to free trade. Cobden asked: "What is free trade?"—and this in, perhaps, one of the most marvellous speeches he ever delivered during the Corn Law agitation—"not the pulling down of custom-houses; by free trade we mean the abolition of all protective duties." Mr. Laing, the Finance Minister of India, a Free Trader himself, in dealing with this very question of cotton duties, said:—

> "Free Trade does not mean that there shall be no taxes, but that taxes shall be levied solely with a view to revenue, and not partly with a view to revenue and partly to protection."

That is the position which the Government take. I think every Member of this House will admit that this is a Free Trade country. Even the Member for Sheffield will not question that. But, none the less, we raise 20 millions of our revenue out of our Customs Duties. Is it any violation of Free Trade principles to raise money by taxes on tea, while we produce no tea in this country, where we raise it for purely revenue purposes? Or is it a violation of free trade to raise money on spirits? No; because we levy a corresponding Excise Duty on spirits made at home, and that is the principle which regulates the whole of our Free Trade policy. And, bear in mind, the consumer pays. Of course, if, as in America, you allow the native manufacturer to produce the same article and do not charge him an Excise Duty, whilst you impose an Import Duty, he raises his price accordingly, and puts the money in his own pocket. But there is no room for that in connection with the system which we adopt. The next charge against me is, that I have imposed a heavy burden on Lancashire, and my right hon. Friend drew a picture of the distress there which caused me much regret. It must not be supposed that the Government have no sympathy with the state of trade in that county, but he asserted that the depression was aggravated by the imposition of a heavy burden on the industry of Lancashire. I deny that proposition altogether. Who pays the tax? We are levying an Import Duty on a large product of Indian tea; last year the duty on tea grown in India was within a fraction of £3,000,000 in this country. Is that a tax upon the people of India? No, Sir, that is a tax upon the consumers in this country; and if my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer were to ask the House to double the Duties on tea, or to take them off altogether, the effect would be seen in every grocer's shop next morning; the price would go up or come down according to which of these proposals was accepted. The tax would be paid by the people, as all Import Duties are paid by the consumer. I quite admit that excessive duties so raise prices as to discourage and diminish consumption; but I do not think that the question of ½d. in 10d., the Duty now proposed, will affect the consumption of cotton goods of the highest quality and most costly description: and even if it did, the Indian Government would have the remedy in its own hands. There would be no revenue; it would decrease and decrease. The whole basis of the argument and foundation of the situation is, that these Customs Duties shall be paid into the Indian Exchequer. With reference to the third objection—the inadequacy of the Excise Duties—we do not levy this Excise Duty on the coarser counts. Why? Because we say there is practically no importation of those coarser counts. The importation of grey yarns below 24s. dwindled down to an infinitesimal figure 14 years ago, and has gone down and down ever since. Some time ago, of these coarser counts of grey yarns under 24s., we sent to Bombay 1,890,000 lbs.; in 1872, the exports went down to 234,000 lbs.; in 1879 to 166,000 lbs., in 1884, when the duties were taken off and no shadow of protection existed and the Lancashire spinners had the opportunity of pushing the trade if they had wished it, they went down to 55,804 lbs.; last year they went down to 8,500 lbs. It is said in India that between 20's and 24's competition does not begin. I have already said that—

> "if you can prove that the 20 limit is too low and should be raised to 24, power is reserved to the Indian Government, with the consent of the Secretary of State, to alter that figure."

I say that the same principle applies to my Lancashire friends. If they can show that this limit works injustice to them, and is in any way protective, I am equally pledged to remedy the evil. Our principle has been all through that there shall not be Protection. No one will say that it is possible, in the imposition of any new tax, especially a complicated Excise Tax, to deal at the first moment with all the possibilities of the case, or to strike off a measure which will not require amendment. I say frankly and openly to the Lancashire manufacturers, as I already have said to the Scottish manufacturers in dealing with dyed yarns—

> "If you will prove that there is any injustice done to you, I will do my best to remedy that injustice."

This is purely a question for inquiry, and for inquiry alone. It is impossible to discuss it on the floor of this House. Given the evil and injustice, we will endeavour to find a remedy. What are the reasons for imposing these duties? First of all, financial necessity. You may ask, Why are we in this financial difficulty? It arises from two causes—first, our increasing expenditure. It is a matter of history than ten years ago we added 30,000 soldiers to our Indian Army, 10,000 of whom were British and 20,000 were native troops. During the same period Nature has added 23,000,000 to the Indian population, and it is clear that you cannot govern that extra number of people without additional cost. There is a rise in all Government expenditure, but the great evil is the constant fall of exchange. [*Opposition Cheers.*] The Hon. Member for Sleaford cheers that statement. The fact is, that week by week and day by day the cost of governing India is increasing as the value of the rupee falls. If these Duties were abolished in the past, it was because financial conditions admitted of it, and they are imposed now because financial reasons require them. Is my right hon. Friend prepared to say that Import Duties should be placed on everything else, and that Cotton Duties should be left out? If we remove all the Import Duties it will be a question of millions. On what principle can you justify the exemption of any particular class of goods? You would say to India:—

> "You must pay on this and not on that, because we have a great interest in that commodity."

An hon. Member suggest Machinery. I ask: Is there any tax on machinery in Lancashire? Can you not buy your engines and machinery at the lowest price and in the cheapest market? Why should not the people of India do the same? They have great interest in this matter. They have to pay the freight, the insurance, and the enormous depreciation, which is necessarily rapid in their climate, and they also put their machinery up at much greater cost than we do. Beyond this we must remember that India is not a self-governing country, and we must therefore watch with the greatest eagerness the public opinion of India on these questions. We cannot expect India to ignore what are our arrangements with our self-governing dependencies. What is the position of the Cotton Duties in other parts of the British Empire? Take the great Dominion of Canada. The Duty on yarns below 40's there is 25 per cent., while on woven goods it is 22½ per cent., on bleached goods it is 25 per cent., and on dyed and coloured goods it is 30 per cent. At the Cape of Good Hope there is a uniform duty all round of 12 per cent., and in New Zealand a Duty of 20 per cent. except on sewing cottons or yarns, and 10 per cent. with certain exceptions on woven goods. You cannot explain to the people of India as you can to those of this country all the distinctions between the fiscal arrangements of our self-governing dependencies and ourselves. We believe it is to the interest of India not to have a protective system, which, in the long run, would be injurious to the manufacturers of that country. It is beyond all question that the imposition of these Duties is popular in India, and if the Imperial Government had taken the course my right hon. Friend suggests, it would have had a very grave and serious political effect. The right hon. Gentleman talks about agitation on the part of Anglo-Indians. I tell him that every authority, every expression of public opinion, and every class in India are united as they have never been before on this question. You have not only the Council at home, but you have also the Viceroy, the Legislative Council, the whole of the European community, all classes of natives, the public Press, and every section of society who believe that the exemption of cotton from Import Duties was an act of injustice to India. At all events, I say that the deliberate conclusion at which the Government have arrived is that a widespread feeling of dissatisfaction and of danger would be created if the wishes of India were disregarded on this question. You ought not to defy public opinion on this question. You may try to educate and improve it, but we have to deal with the facts as they are. I have only to say further that as in 1894, my noble Friend Lord Kimberley, in the exercise of constitutional power, refused to sanction these Duties, I equally in the exercise of constitutional power have sanctioned them. I am prepared at the proper time and place to argue that there has been nothing oppressive, unprecedented, or illegal in what has been done. This is the way in which the financial policy of India has been regulated, and in a day or two I will lay on the Table of the House the most masterly dispatches of two distinguished men who have held my office—the Duke of Argyll and the Marquess of Salisbury —who have dealt with this point of the relationship between the home Government and that of India on general and financial policy: and when I have done so I am sure the House will be satisfied that, whether the course now being taken be right or wrong, it is strictly in accordance with precedent. Our case in one word is this—the state of the finances of India necessitated additional taxation; the opinion of the Indian Government and people was unanimous in favour of Customs Duties on imports; the home Government could not permanently compel the people of India to exempt their largest imports from these Duties; we were compelled both in the interests of India and of our own manufacturing population to require that these Import Duties should not be protective whenever goods were imported from abroad and were in competition with similar goods manufactured in India; and we required that an equivalent in Excise Duties should be imposed on competing goods manufactured in India. We say in explanation of this that there is not, and has not been for many years, any effective competition between India and foreign countries in respect of the coarser cotton goods, which, we allege, are consumed in India by the very poorest class of the population; that to tax these goods would be a grievous and an oppressive direct tax on the poorest part of the natives, for which there is no justification. We say that the goods of a finer quality are not produced to any extent in India, but that Lancashire has a monopoly of them, and, I believe, will continue to have it. We further say that, if it should appear on clear evidence that the Government have drawn the line too high, or that it will not remove any and every protective character, her Majesty's Government will, in concert with that of India, consider the matter with a view to carry out loyally their declared intention to avoid protective injustice. That is the policy of her Majesty's Government, and that is the policy which I have endeavoured, feebly and imperfectly perhaps, to pursue during the time I have been in office. I believe I have tried to do my duty to India as Indian Secretary, and that I have not neglected the interests of the people of Lancashire. I and my colleagues are, of course, responsible to this House, which is the ultimate tribunal on all these questions. We know the consequences that will follow if this House should censure the administrative acts of the Government. We shall not shrink from accepting that responsibility if that censure is inflicted. But I would also say respectfully and firmly that if the Government is responsible to this House, the House is responsible to the country. My right hon. Friend has said that India has no representative in this House. I deny the accuracy of that allegation. The Representatives of India in this House are not one or two individuals, not even the section of Members who are thought to be experts on the one hand, or those men who have a profound, a deep, and a special interest in Indian affairs on the other. Every Member of this House, whether elected by an English, or by a Scotch, or by an Irish constituency, is a Member for India. All the interests of India—personal, political, commercial, financial, and social—are committed to the individual and collective responsibility of the House of Commons. I ask the House to discharge that gigantic trust, uninfluenced by any selfish or Party feeling, but with wisdom, and justice, and generosity.

*SIR G. T. CHESNEY (Oxford) asked to be allowed, as one who was particularly interested in India, very earnestly to bear his testimony to the powerful arguments of the Secretary of State, and to urge upon the House not to take any step calculated to have an injurious effect on the people of India. The right hon. Gentleman had pointed out the injustice and the illogical nature of dealing out to the people of India high-handed measures which would not be inflicted upon any self-governing colony. It was said that India had not free institutions, and that, therefore, Parliament had a more immediate right to interfere directly in Indian affairs. But it might be pleaded that if India was not self-governing, at least it was self-supporting, and it would be extremely unjust for Parliament, while having no responsibility for the expenditure of India, to dictate to the Government of India in what way their taxes were to be levied and what their fiscal arrangements should be. The direct action and interference suggested by the Motion was a new departure. He would remind the House that about 35 years ago, when the finances of India were placed in a state of embarrassment owing to the great outlay of the Mutiny and the loss of revenue that followed it, the Government of India at that time put enormous Duties—as much as 20 per cent.—upon almost every article imported into India. Mr. Wilson, who had held the position of Secretary to the Treasury, was sent to India, as Finance Minister, and he reduced these duties to 10 per cent., not because he questioned the right or propriety of the Indian Government to impose them, but because he found they were so excessive as to be destroying the import trade. But not a word of remonstrance upon the action of the Government of India was ever raised in this country. It was felt that in a great emergency it was the duty of the Government of India on their own responsibility to take whatever measures were necessary to restore the financial equilibrium. The Duties were gradually reduced to 7½ per cent. and afterwards to 5 per cent. In 1882 they were taken off altogether, not in deference to any definite maxim or any specific declaration of coming from this country, but because the improved financial position of the

Government of India permitted of their remission without the raising of any countervailing taxation. Now an entirely different state of things had arisen, and nothing that had occurred in the past prevented the Indian Government from again raising these Duties to meet a financial emergency. The House must also bear in mind that the present difficulty had arisen almost entirely owing to the fall in silver, and that not only had the action of the Government of this country prevented any readjustment or rehabilitation of silver, but they had also prevented the question from being even discussed in a rational and sympathetic way. The Home Government and Parliament were therefore under a great responsibility to the Government of India in this matter. The Secretary of State had referred to the different degrees of reciprocity in practice in England and in India. A great cry was now raised by an English industry because a 5 per cent. duty was to be levied on a certain class of goods at present exempt. But we taxed the commoner kinds of Indian tea to the extent of 100 per cent., and cigars which could be purchased in India at 1s. a thousand paid a Duty of something like 1,000 per cent. In face of these facts, could this country with any sort of conscience or reason complain if, in the interest of a harassed revenue, a duty of 5 per cent. was put upon a certain class of goods imported into India. They had been told of the enormous importance of this 5 per cent. duty to Lancashire trade, but no branch of trade with India could flourish unless the people of that country were contented and prosperous. There were latent forces in India ready at any moment to make themselves felt on the surface of society, and it was necessary that the Indian people should feel not only that they were governed justly, but that they were governed in their own interest. If we did not, a feeling would sooner or later arise, which would produce distrust and disbelief in the honesty of England, and serious consequences would inevitably follow. The situation would then become one of great gravity, and he begged the House, before coming to a decision, to balance well the statements made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bury on the one side, and those of the Secretary for India on the other. He would have been glad if the former right hon. Gentleman had refrained from his unworthy insinuation against what he termed the Anglo-Indian Officials. The impression which he gave the House by his speech was that these Duties were imposed in order to obtain funds for paying those Officials larger salaries and pensions. The Officials concerned in dealing with this matter had absolutely no interest in these "compensation allowances," as they were called, which were granted only as being absolutely necessary for the poorer class of European servants of the State whose incomes had been cut down to nearly one-half by the decline in the value of the rupee. The right hon. Gentleman's insinuation was an unfortunate one, and that was the first time that the motives of the Indian Officials had been impugned. Their judgment might be called into question, and their conduct too, but never before had their honesty of motive been questioned.

Mr. J. E. BARLOW (Somerset, Frome) said, he had been engaged for some years in a business which was affected by the proposals of the Government—namely, in the exportation of Lancashire cotton goods to India and other places in the East; but, not being a spinner or a manufacturer, he naturally did not approach this subject with any predilections in favour of the moderate Duty on cotton goods going into India. One of the Blue-books on this matter showed that during the last 25 years, the importation of British cotton goods into India had increased steadily, while during the last 15 years the output of the Indian cotton mills had increased enormously; and the facts further showed that not only had the Lancashire cotton trade increased in export to India, but that when there was a duty, and when there was no duty, the manufacture of cotton goods in India itself had increased to a very large extent. India had many disadvantages to cope with, chief among them being the heavy cost of machinery, but notwithstanding the difficulties, the output of Indian cotton goods had steadily improved, and the manufacture of jute was entering into close competition with Dundee. The Government had done right to recognise the fact that India had managed, in spite of the opposition of Lancashire, to hold her own; and they were well advised in exempting the coarser yarns, because the production of those yarns had been wrested from Lancashire for consumption, not only in India, but in China and Japan. Cotton goods, however, were the last things upon which the Duty had been placed, and he did not see why such an exception should have been made for the benefit of Lancashire. There ought to be equality of treatment, and there was no reason why this industry should have any advantage over others in this country. He could bear testimony to the fact that, much as this matter was disliked in Lancashire, the action of the Government was quite as much disliked in India, with reference to countervailing duties. And he received by every Indian mail complaints loud, deep, and bitter, that the English Parliament was sacrificing India for the interests of Lancashire, and the votes which that county brought. The position was one of great difficulty and delicacy, but, bearing in mind all the circumstances, he thought the Government had dealt with it in a way which was a credit to them. They should have at heart the interests of India, with its vast population, just as much as those of Lancashire, and he hoped that Indian affairs would not get into such a state that it might be said, as was said in regard to Ireland, that she was a mere pawn, to be kicked, together with her financial policy, across the floor of that House. He was unwilling to support a policy which would show India and our other dependencies that they were to be governed merely for our own advantage. Such a policy would be unworthy of Englishmen and unworthy of the Empire, and would in the end meet with deserved disaster.

Mr. R. W. HANBURY (Preston) said, he was unable to enter into a good many of the technicalities raised by this question, but there were one or two broader considerations which were well worth the attention of the House. Nobody could echo more thoroughly than he did the feelings and sentiments contained in the eloquent speech of the right hon. Gentleman, the Secretary for India, as to the necessity of complete justice to India. He, for one, cordially sympathised with the right hon. Gentleman in that. He thought that, after all, the fact that India was unrepresented except by the Members of the House, imposed on everyone of them, whether they came from Lancashire or not, the absolute necessity, while protecting the interests of his own constituency, of not losing sight of the interests of India. Of all counties, Lancashire seemed to him the best able to take this view, because Lancashire was most interested in the peace and contentment of India. He thought this was a wider question than a mere Lancashire question. It raised important considerations for the whole of England, for it was a serious thing when agriculture was in its present condition, that the next greatest industry in the country should be in any way crippled. Therefore, on that score this could not be considered merely a question for Lancashire. The cotton industry was concentrated almost in one county. No doubt if damage was done to any industry diffused over the country at large, the people affected might find other employment around them; but in Lancashire there was no other outlet. The contention on the other side of the House was, that India had a perfect right, in regard to her finance, to consider her own interest alone. To that contention he gave an empathic denial. He thought that the interests of the Mother-country were also fairly entitled to consideration. What was the tendency and thought at this time in regard to self-governing colonies? Was it not to try to make arrangements by which their tariffis should be reduced? Therefore, if India were a self-governing colony there would be pretty much the same objection raised to this proceeding. England was not responsible for the credit and finance of self-governing colonies as it was for that of India. By the way in which the House had constantly interfered with Indian finance, they had made themselves responsible for it. That was the broad distinction between India and the self-governing colonies. One consideration had certainly not yet been stated to the House. He asked himself, as a Lancashire Member, How was it that a deficit came about? His view of the case was this, that if this Imperial Parliament did its duty to India there would be no deficit at all. It was unjust that, because England as a whole did not take her fair share of the military and home charges, the deficit should fall almost wholly on Lancashire. He would point out how that arose, at any rate from his point of view. He objected that Lancashire should be made so largely responsible for the fads thrust upon India, which went to create the deficit. Take the Opium Commission. That was no doubt a small matter, but it was most unjust that one half of the charge should fall upon India. Why in the world should India pay half? The whole of the people of India of every class were opposed to it, and surely the evidence already produced was enough to convince every fair-minded man that it was unjust to make India pay for it. If they were to adopt the principle that Lancashire was to be made responsible for these deficits, they would have to keep a much greater check on the faddists in the House of Commons. There was no doubt that the enforcement of the Cantonments Acts was entirely against Indian opinion. What would be the case of India if the Acts were enforced? Sir George White told them that the English army would hardly be able to carry on its work in time of War, that it would be rotten by disease, and that we should have to add largely to it. Was it fair that the charges for that should fall upon India? Then, he thought, that the cost of the India Office was out of all proportion to the work it had to do, and it was to be remembered that it was not in any way under the control of the House. A Royal Commission had inquired into the condition of every other Department of the State, but they were not allowed to look at the India Office. What was the cost of it? He would not have thought that, with a Government in India, the India Office would have cost anything like what the Foreign and Colonial Offices cost. But what was the fact; While the Colonial Office cost only £40,000 a year, and the Foreign Office £60,000, the India Office cost £120,000. There at any rate was £60,000 a year which might well be saved. He took another point. There was a long discussion in the House of Lords, and what was their opinion with regard to home charges. They were about unanimous; and there could be no doubt that the military charges were grossly unjust. If India were self-governing, like the colonies, they would not dare to impose these charges upon it. What were the facts? India paid the whole of the charges for all the troops in India, the passage of the troops out and home again. In addition to this, in the Estimates of the year there was a sum of £600,000, which India was called upon to pay for the training of the troops in England. He said that was a perfectly monstrous thing. Even when Indian troops were employed out of India, as at Suakim, every penny came out of the Indian funds. Even when a few men came over to figure at the opening of the Indian Institute, India had to pay. Those were charges which ought to be borne by the Imperial Parliament, and not placed on the shoulders of Lancashire alone. Was the right hon. Gentleman quite sure those Duties would not be protective? He should like to hear on the point the hon. Member for Oldham, who had said that he deeply regretted that it was necessary to impose import duties of any kind, for they were not in harmony with Free Trade. Why did he say they were going to be protective?

Because countervailing Excise Duties were so illogical that it was impossible they could last. While the Import Duties would remain he did not believe the Excise Duties would last. Why make an exception as to these Excise Duties? He believed that the cost of the collection of these Excise Duties would be almost as great as the amount they would produce. Could a system like that continue? Another point was—Had any arrangement been made with the Indian native states? If not they were no good at all; indeed they might prove a serious detriment to India itself. These native states formed a very large portion of India. He thought that whereas the portion of India under British control was something like 800,000 square miles, the territory of the native states was about 600,000 square miles. With regard to this enormous territory they made no provision as to Excise Duties. If they made an exception to Manchester, why should not other trades complain? Why should not the worsted trade of Bradford complain? And if they extended these Excise Duties generally, they would do a great injustice to India, and they would do a great deal to crush the rising industries on which the prosperity of India depended. The right hon. Gentleman said that these Duties would fall not upon the producer in Lancashire but on the consumer in India. He quoted the Tea Duties, but the difference was—England was a rich country, while India was a remarkably poor country, so poor that the consumer could not afford to pay the extra price. For that reason they in Lancashire feared that it would fall on them. But they might be told that, after all, the goods which Lancashire supplied were to a great extent sold to the rich of India and not to the poor. He did not know how that could be the case. When he considered the enormous amount of goods sent to India by Lancashire—£28,000,000 a year—he was not persuaded that these goods were bought by the rich. There were very few rich people in India, and there could be little doubt that in the mass these goods were sold, not to the rich, but to the poor. With regard to these Excise Duties, he was sure they would have another unfortunate effect upon the English producer, and it was this: if the Excise Duty were paid on charges over 20's, naturally the result would be that the coarser goods made in India would be bought because they escaped the Excise Duty. Already the great proportion of the Indian trade was in coarse goods, and when the Excise Duties only touched those above 20's, there would be a larger demand for the coarser goods. If the demand for other goods ceased, they would kill the Lancashire trade. The result of the Excise Duties in India, would be as disastrous as the Import Duties themselves. The demand for goods under 20's would be increased in India. Then, it might be asked, Why should not Lancashire weave more goods of that class for export to India. The answer was, that it would not be profitable to do so as long as an Import Duty was levied upon such goods, and as long as no countervailing Excise Duty was imposed on the Indian-made article. The complaint of Lancashire was not so much against the Indian Government, which, after all, had a deficit to make good, as against the Government at home. India and Lancashire were united in maintaining that a number of the present Indian home charges ought to be borne by the Imperial Treasury. These charges ought to fall neither on Lancashire alone nor on India alone. It was monstrous that Lancashire should be expected to pay for the costly experiments of faddists, through whose action expenses had been incurred which helped to increase substantially the Indian deficit.

CAPTAIN J. SINCLAIR (Dumbartonshire) said, there was no necessity to discuss upon this subject the general question of our Indian policy, or of the various points of criticism which the Indian Government might be open to in other respects than in regard to the Import Duties; nor did it seem necessary to discuss even the question of the Import Duty. They must accept at the present time as inevitable the imposition of Import Duties, with the hope, hope, however, that they might soon be able to remove them. Anyone who listened to the speech of the Secretary of State for India must agree that it was necessary to take a wide view of the subject. One point they might recollect with advantage was, that this Import

Duty had been decided upon and established on the initiative of the Legislative Council. That brought them to the further consideration, in which they must all acquiesce, that, as the Legislative Council was the organ of the British authority in India, it would be a very serious thing to deal any blow to that authority; and it would not be a matter in which those who sat on his side of the House could, as Radicals, find anything congenial to their principles in other respects. His object in rising was to mention certain interests which were vitally involved in this question, namely, the interests of the dyers of Scotland, who were large exporters to India and British Burmah of goods which would be affected by this new Import Duty and new Tariff Act. The policy was this—that an Import Duty was to be levied on these materials of all counts, and under the Tariff Act an Excise Duty was to be levied only on such counts as were 20's and under. Scottish manufacturers acquiesced in this Import Duty; they recognised that it was necessary to take a broad and liberal view of the necessities of the situation, but they desired to draw attention to the effect of the Excise Duty upon their exports to India. It was mentioned by the Secretary of State for India that the total imports into India of materials of these low counts had fallen last year in Bombay to 8,500 lb. But there were exported from this country of these dyed yarns of low counts considerable quantities to British Burmah, for the last four years, approximating to 4,000,000 lb. per annum, large portions of which would come under the Import Duty, whilst they would not be protected or countervailed by an equivalent Excise Duty on Indian manufactures. In this part of the trade, therefore, there was direct competition to this extent on the part of the Scottish manufacturers with the trade in India. But whilst these counts of 21 and under, dyed in India, would be landed duty free in that country, similar yarns dyed in this country would be subject to an Import Duty of 5 per cent. There was the further point, that Indian yarns above 20's, which were subject to Excise Duty, were subject to this Duty in their grey state, whereas British yarns were made liable to Import Duty in their dyed state. To sum up, the situation as it affected Scottish manufacturers was this: that the Indian dyer paid no duty on 21's and under, and less than one-half the duty paid by the British dyer on yarns over 21. He thanked the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for India for his courtesy in consenting to receive a deputation on the subject, and to discuss the points involved in the ensuing week. It would be a great satisfaction to those who were so deeply interested in this question that the right hon. Gentleman had repeated the assurance that it was the intention of the Government to deprive these duties of all protective character. Those for whom he spoke did not ask for any special advantage or any unfair treatment, but they simply asked for equal justice between them and the Indian dyer.

MR. T. H. SIDEBOTTOM (Stalybridge) said, he certainly did not expect to have to reopen the question of Free Trade *versus* Protection at this time. The system of Protection inaugurated by these duties ought to be condemned alike by the House and by the country. He used the word Protection advisedly, because the Secretary of State, in his very able speech, gave the whole case away when he said the bulk of the yarns sent to India was consumed by hand looms. It was absolutely impossible to collect the Excise Duty from hand looms, and, therefore, what became of the argument as to a countervailing duty? A five per cent. duty undoubtedly increased the price of cotton goods in India, greatly handicapped English manufacturers, hampered our trade with India, and encouraged the use of cotton mills in India to an undue and unfair extent. Some hon. Members might think that five per cent. was not, after all, a very heavy duty, and that it could not make much difference; but he reminded them that the charge against the English manufacturer was not on his profit, if profit he had. but on his whole turn-over. He thought most English manufacturers, if they could be assured of five per cent. profit on their turn-over, would be quite willing to accept it and undertake not to apply for anything more. It seemed to him that from a purely Indian point of view these duties were utterly indefensible, The Secretary of State had told them that the people of India were in favour of the duty. But who were the people of India? They did not consist exclusively of the Government officials or of the shareholders in Indian mills. If it were possible to consult the great body of the consumers in India would they be found in favour of the Duty? He thought they were far too 'cute, and too alive to their own interest to be in favour of any tax upon what constituted their chief article of clothing. Lord Salisbury, in one of his able despatches, said this duty was maintained at the expense of consumers, principally the poorer classes, upon whom it told with particular hardship.

MR. H. H. FOWLER: That was the old Duty; before the exemption.

MR. T. H. SIDEBOTTOM: That was disputed. Those were true and wise words. It was undoubtedly the duty of the British Government to do everythiug in their power to develop the internal resources of India; but surely it could not be their duty to tax the many for the benefit of the few, or to assist English and other capitalists in amassing enormous fortunes by developing cotton spinning and cotton manufacture in India to the exclusion and ruin of manufacturers here. Although the poorer classes in India were very heavily taxed, many of the landowners, and the higher classes generally, possessed fabulous wealth, and probably were the lightest taxed class in the country. He thought that by an Income Tax or some other means, relief might be found without making such a retrograde step as the re-imposition of this protective and obnoxious Duty. Apart altogether from the direct interests of India, the effect of the duty upon the great cotton trade of this country could not be ignored. The cotton trade here was in a state of partial collapse. Never before in its history was the cotton trade more depressed, and it was greatly to be feared matters would get worse. Many mills were now being worked solely and wholly for the sake of operatives, and many concerns had for long been unable to sell a quarter of their production. The duty was of the most oppressive and onerous character. It was calculated, with, he believed, perfect accuracy, that a cotton mill of 1,000 looms in England, making cotton for India out of Indian cotton was placed at a disadvantage of £15,000 a year compared with the mills in India of the same size.

MR. H. H. FOWLER: Out of Indian cotton?

MR. T. H. SIDEBOTTOM: Yes.

MR. H. H. FOWLER: None comes here now.

MR. T. H. SIDEBOTTOM: The figures were really very much larger, but he had reduced them for fear of being thought guilty of exaggeration. A further tax was placed upon that 1,000 looms, by this duty, of at the very least £5,000 a year, so that a tax of upwards of £20,000 a year was placed upon a mill of 1,000 looms weaving in this country. Lancashire did not object to the advantages of cheap wages, cheap cotton, markets close at hand, and, above all, in the longer hours of work possessed by India; but they did object to have their trade torn from them by their own Government, by the aid of a Protective Duty. It was the inherent right of all the subjects of the Queen to trade on equal terms within the Dominions subject to the control of the British Parliament. It was well known that the imposition of this Duty was entirely owing to the exigencies of the Indian Government, and it was notorious that India, at the present moment, was suffering from the great fall in exchange, owing to the depression in silver, But, great as was the loss to the Government of India, the loss to the British manufacturers was as great or greater. They had been told by the right hon. Gentleman of very large exports to India. The statement was literally true, but the argument founded upon it was fallacious, and the deductions and conclusions drawn from it were absolutely erroneous. The heavy shipments had, to a great extent, been caused by the anticipation of the Duty; the goods had been sent to India in the forlorn hope that something might happen to enable them to be sold. We had a fierce competition waged against us by foreign nations, owing to their longer hours, lower rate of wages, and hostile tariffs; and we found it every day more and more difficult to carry on our trade successfully. He, however, did not despair. He believed in the energy of our race and in the revival of our trade. If only we discarded this policy of bygone days we should have brighter days in store, and we should surmount the present crisis as we had surmounted many others.

*MR. P. J. STANHOPE (Burnley) said, that speaking as the representative of one of the largest centres of the cotton industry, he could say for his constituents that they were not animated in this matter by any unworthy jealousy of the manufacturers of India, or by a disregard, in the slightest degree, of the interests of the people of India as a whole. The people of Burnley had this peculiarity, that, while one large section was engaged in weaving cloth, which happily went all over the world, another large section was engaged in the manufacture of looms which were sent to those very Indian manufacturers who were the cause of the imposition of the very Import Duty about which all this agitation had arisen. He could, therefore, say that his constituents did not regard the matter from a purely selfish standpoint. Indeed, he could go further, and say that the people of Lancashire, as a whole, were animated in their action by no selfish considerations. They had heard a great deal in the course of recent Debates in the House, of the selfish and sectional interest of the people of Lancashire. That same cry was raised when Lancashire 50 years ago led the way in the agitation for the Repeal of the Corn Laws; and as the people of Lancashire were then the foremost champions of Free Trade they were to-day the foremost supporters of Free Trade. The Secretary of State for India had made from the point of view of the Department which he represented, a very able and powerful speech. But the right hon. Gentleman had missed some of the points on which the Motion was made; and though he had made by the concession he had offered a considerable departure from the position he originally took up, the right hon. Gentleman did not altogether meet the objections which had been raised by the industrial interests of Lancashire. The right hon. Gentleman commenced his speech with a very warm advocacy of the merits of the Anglo-India Civil Servants. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bury had, however, said nothing whatever derogatory of Mr. Westland, or of any of the other able men who served the State with such distinction in India. But he was bound to say, that while he recognised the merits of the Civil Service of India, it was a service that had so large a representation in the Government of India, that the interests of the natives of India had comparatively an inferior hearing in that House and in this country. The right hon. Gentleman also entered at great length into what he was pleased to call "the financial necessities of India." But not once, either directly or indirectly, did the right hon. Gentleman dispute the demands of the Indian Government for additional revenue, which every one knew was needed solely in order to make up the loss entailed by the officials of that Government owing to the depreciation of the rupee; and not once did the right hon. Gentleman suggest the possibility of meeting the deficit by a reduction in expenditure, but throughout his entire speech insisted absolutely on the production by some form of taxation of this additional revenue required by the Indian Government. He believed, and in that belief he was supported by a large section of Indian opinion, that there were great possibilities of economy in both the military and civil charges of India. The right hon. Gentleman had said that public opinion in India was entirely in favour of those Duties. He would like to know how the right hon. Gentleman arrived at his knowledge of the public opinion in India. There were two branches of public opinion in India. There was the public opinion that was purely official, which it would seem had alone guided the right hon. Gentleman in the judgment at which he had arrived. But there was another public opinion which was solely interested in the welfare of the people of India, and which insisted that if due economy were exercised in the public charges of India, justice would be done to the natives of India, and at the same time Indian finance would be settled on a satisfactory basis. The right hon. Gentleman quoted for the House the opinion of Lord Lansdowne on those Duties. But he forgot to give the House the opinion of one of his most eminent colleagues in the Government, Lord Kimberley, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, who, when approached only last year on this very subject, by a Deputation of the Blackburn Chamber of Commerce, said—

> "There remains only one considerable source of revenue, and I mention it at once with a thrill of horror—Import Duties. I need hardly say that that is not within our contemplation. I do not suppose that anybody would attribute to me a heresy of that kind, and I only mention it for the purpose of dismissing it."

He did not know whether the noble Lord had been converted by the Secretary for India to views which only last year he looked upon as heresy; but, at all events, the people of India had reason to complain that the Government of which the noble Lord was a distinguished Member, should without any sufficient justification for the change of position, sanction the imposition of Import Duties, which, in his opinion, was a serious departure from ancient Liberal traditions. He was glad to hear that the right hon. Gentleman was prepared to reconsider the arrangement with regard to the countervailing Duties; but though he accepted it as a good augur for the feature, he did not think it would justify the Government in the new departure they had made. Every Import Duty in India, of whatever nature, must be a tax on the consumers of India; and it should be remembered that cotton cloth was one of the primary necessities of the natives of India. The right hon. Gentleman seemed to assume that it was only a small question of the number of counts, and that if he changed the particular count to 15 or to 25, as the case might be, it would meet the difficulties of the situation. But it would do nothing of the sort. What the right hon. Gentleman had done was to authorise an Excise Duty upon yarn alone, and it was because it was on yarn alone, that the opponents of the policy said that no matter what the right hon. Gentleman might do in regard to the change of count, the Duty would still act as a protective Duty. The grey cloth imported into India represented 9,997,000 lbs., and was valued at 1·77d. per lb. Upon that there was a duty of 5 per cent. The bleached, printed, dyed and coloured cloth represented 8,020,000 lbs., but in consequence of the superior processes applied to it, it cost as much as 2·06d. per lb. It was obvious that this duty, when compared with the duty paid by the importer on the superior qualities, must be absolutely inadequate to create a countervailing duty; therefore, unless the Secretary of State for India was prepared to go further and make this duty a countervailing duty all round, and absolutely protect the English importer against protective duties, the right hon. Gentleman's concession was insufficient for its purpose. He had shown that, as far as Lancashire was concerned, it had some right to have its case heard. Inasmuch as twenty years ago the whole country was agitated to obtain the repeal of these duties; inasmuch as in 1879 a resolution, which the Secretary for India had carefully avoided quoting, was passed by the House of Commons condemning these duties as unjust to the Indian consumer; and inasmuch as the result of a long period of agitation the duties were repealed, it must not be supposed that Lancashire would now be induced, by small concessions of detail, to consent to the re-imposition of the duties. They would rightly continue to agitate for their repeal, and for a return to the sound financial doctrines which import duties could never represent. They accepted with great satisfaction such concessions as the Secretary for India had already made; but if the right hon. Member for Bury went to a division, he should vote with him in order to place on record his protest against these duties.

SIR J. LEIGH (Stockport) said, that his constituency was suffering very much from the depression at the present time, and he thought that no more inopportune occasion than the present could have arisen for the disturbance of the Lancashire trade. Lancashire would never rest as long as these import duties remained. But the speech of the Secretary for India, and particularly that portion of it which promised a consideration of any suggestions for correcting the protective character of the import duties, had commended itself to him. He thought that Lancashire men ought now to turn their attention to bringing before the Secretary for India all the suggestions they could; because the right hon. Member for Bury had conclusively proved that under the present proposals the Indian weaver would be protected to a very serious extent; and that if, owing to the cheapness of American cotton, Lancashire could compete with India in the coarser kind of goods, these import duties would prevent that competition. In bringing pressure to remove that protective element, Lancashire Members would be doing their duty to their constituents. He was gratified that they had received larger concessions from the Government than he had expected. But for those concessions he should have thought it his duty to vote in favour of the motion.

Mr. E. W. BECKETT (York, N.R., Whitby) said, that no one could complain of the discussion being raised, and least of all the Government, to whom it had afforded an opportunity of expounding their policy in a manner which must be convincing to everyone. He thought it would be a mistake to divide, because there was no justification for turning the Government out on this issue. Those who had spoken in favour of the Motion did not seem to have really faced the difficulty. There was in India a deficit which must be met immediately, and the only means of meeting it was by an increase of revenue. No one had pointed out any other method of increasing the revenue than by these Import Duties, and until they did that, the supporters of the Motion had no case. The voice of Lancashire had never been backward in making itself heard on any political question; but now hon. Members tried to defend Lancashire from the charge of selfishness. If Lancashire had not selfish motives, what were they? Members of the House of Commons were responsible for the Empire at large, and were bound to consider the interests of India as much as the interests of Lancashire. In this matter Lancashire had undoubtedly been treated with great consideration, and every attention had been paid to her wishes. These duties had been imposed only as a last resort, and for long the cotton trade had enjoyed special exemption. He did not see any ground for further exemption. In other ways Lancashire interests had been guarded by the imposition of a countervailing Excise Duty. It was usual to levy this Excise Duty at a lower rate than the Customs Duty; but in this case, for the advantage of Lancashire, it was fixed at the same rate. If England were entitled to demand free entry of her goods into India, India was equally entitled to demand free entry of her goods into England. Would the hon. Members who denounced the imposition of the Cotton Duties in India defend the imposition of a Tea Duty in England? It was urged that Lancashire was being taxed for the sake of India. In regard to tea, India might say that she was being taxed for the sake of England. The Import Duties were an evil; but the question was whether they were not a necessary evil. If they were not, what was there to serve their purpose? The right hon. Member for Bury made a serio-comic suggestion about graduated Death Duties for India; but it was well known that direct taxation in India was almost impossible. The hon. Member for Burnley talked about economy and the reduction of expenditure. It was always easy to talk about economy, but not so easy to say where exactly it was to be effected. Besides, India's case was urgent, and must be dealt with immediately. It was not enough to say that these Duties were imposed in consequence of the continuous fall in the price of silver, unless it would be shown how that fall could be prevented. He thought that Bi-metallism would crop up in this Debate; and he believed that the Motion had a veiled, as well as an ostensible, object. The latter was to save Lancashire from competition; but the former was to help on Bi-metallism. This agitation had been started and supported by the Bi-metallists; and that fact made him look on it with some suspicion. Again, if the difficulty were the result of the fall in the exchange, yet, that fall cut both ways. Why should India be denied the right which was exercised by all our self-governing colonies? The mere fact that India was not represented in the House ought to make hon. Members more careful, and more tender of her interests, and more anxious to give all weight and authority to the opinions expressed by India. As a matter of fact, when the hon. Member for Preston said that there would be an outcry if a self-governing colony imposed a duty of this kind, he could not help noticing, with surprise, that when Mr. Rhodes proposed the imposition of a 12½ per cent. duty all over Africa, it was received with hearty approval even by some of those now objecting to these Duties in India. He thought it was a somewhat unfortunate circumstance that the Opposition should attempt to turn out the Government on this question. If the Opposition voted for the Motion of the right hon. Member for Bury, they would certainly be voting to turn out the Government; and he said that, if they had to choose between the solvency of India, on the one hand, and a slight and, he believed, temporary reduction of the profits of the cotton spinners of Lancashire, on the other hand, he did not think that any patriotic man could hesitate which course of conduct he ought to adopt. He maintained that, in supporting this Motion, hon. Members were taking a narrow view of their Imperial duties and Imperial responsibilities; and it would certainly be an ill-omened thing if the Unionist Party were to defeat the Government on an issue in which personally interested motives were to be allowed to override the interests connected with the welfare of one of our most important dependencies.

Mr. G. WHITELEY (Stockport) said, he wished to deal with the impolicy of imposing these Duties on Lancashire cotton goods. He had been associated with the trade nearly all his life, and, on the principle of *ab uno disce omnes*, he thought that the House would be able to judge from the effect of the duties on one branch of industry what was the effect generally on the whole of the industries of the country. This question was of vital importance to Lancashire — indeed, it was of great gravity; the far-reaching effect of the step could not be exaggerated or magnified. The Government, in permitting the imposition of these duties, had dealt a cruel blow to Lancashire. They had hoped, at any rate, that in the House, once for all, the great question of Import Cotton Duties on goods entering India had been, not only debated, but decided. They had imagined, indeed, that if there was one doctrine which, above all others, had been adopted by a Liberal Ministry, it was the policy of Free Trade as taught by Cobden and Bright. In that belief, they found justification in the declarations of policy by Her Majesty's Ministers from time to time throughout the last twelve months. It was indeed, very difficult to reconcile the policy and the action of the Government with the last Resolution that remained on the records of the House of Commons. That Resolution was a broad and comprehensive one to the effect that—

> "The duties on cotton goods are unjust alike to the consumer and to the producer, and that they ought to be repealed."

The Secretary of State for India alleged that those duties were not protective. that they did not violate this Resolution, and that the principle of Free Trade had not been violated. In this view he did not concur. They had often been taunted with the question as to how it was they had never discovered the enormity and the wickedness of the Import Duties on products entering India until Lancashire began to feel their effects. There were various answers to that question; but he might retort that Lancashire was not the custodian of the whole of the interests of the trading communities of this country. They argued, besides, that there was no parallel or analogy between the question of Import Duties on cotton goods and other products entering India. In the cotton industry there was a great competition between India and England which did not exist in other elements of trade. The export of cotton goods from this country was so enormous in the total exports of the British Isles as to far exceed the products of other industries entering India. In 1893 the Board of Trade Returns showed that the total amount of British exports for that year from this country amounted to £28,776,000; English yarns and goods amounted to £17,864,000, or 62 per cent. In metals, including all sorts of manufactured iron and steel, the amount was £3,012,000, or 10 per cent. There was, therefore, no competition whatever between India and England in the iron and steel industry, for the reason that there only existed in India one iron work, which had unfortunately passed through the hands of two companies before it reached its present owners. In machinery the exports from this country amounted to £2,000,000, or 7 per cent. Neither in the woollen, silk, or other branches of trade was there any competition between this country and India; but in cotton there was certainly great competition between India and England at the present time. India had 3,000,000 spindles, whereas 10 years ago there were only 1,600,000, the increase being 100 per cent. The increase in looms was 73 per cent.; but the increase in Great Britain was only 5 per cent., on the Continent 19 per cent., and in the United States 20 per cent. It was proved to demonstration that the cotton industry in India was at the present time a thriving and progressive one, whereas in Lancashire, taking the whole of the Limited Liability Companies in the South, it was not a progressive, but rather a declining industry. Speaking as a Lancashire manufacturer, he said that they largely attributed the tariff, whatever the right hon. Gentleman might say to the contrary, to the representations made by the Bombay millowners during last year. In consequence of the fact that competition had sprung up largely between Japan, China, and India pressure had been brought to bear on the Authorities in India to impose those dtties, and the consequence was that a wall of protection had been built round the Indian industry which it was impossible for Lancashire to get over. He maintained that up to 20's there was absolute protection; and if he could not convince the Secretary for India of that he would almost go so far as to say he would resign his seat. [*Cries of* "No, no," *and laughter.*] Well, it would be a misfortune if he were to do it. In the able report before them there were significant words to the effect that it would obviously never do for Manchester manufacturers to use up American cotton at 4d. a pound in making a class of goods which the Indian competitors can make up as well out of cotton which costs 3d. a pound. On that text the whole contention was based. If the statement were true the converse was true, and, if American cotton were 3d. a pound, it would be competent for Manchester products to compete with those of Bombay. The remark was a most unfortunate one for Mr. Westland to make. Would the House believe that at the present time American cotton was 3d. a pound?

Mr. A. J. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): What is the price of Surat?

Mr. WHITELEY said, that it was about 2¾d.; but it would pay the Indian millowner at the present price of American cotton to import it and to make it up rather than to use Surat. He had mills, and he could manufacture out of American cotton at 3d. a pound, 20's and under, but he could not compete on favourable terms with any Indian manufacturer or spinner; and he could not do it for the reason that the right hon. Gentleman had environed this business with a wall of protection which he could not climb. So long as that 5 per cent. was upon 20's and under, so long was it out of the power of Lancashire, whatever the price of cotton might be, to compete with India. In the qualities over 20's there was partial protection. The yarn value of cloth was only 60 per cent. of the total value of it. The Indian producer was taxed upon the yarn value, whereas the same goods, made out of the same qualities of yarn and sent to India from England, were taxed upon the full value. Between the yarn and the cloth there are five expensive processes. If he sent to India cloth of the value of 100 pence, it would be taxed 5d., but similar cloth made of Indian spun yarn would be taxed upon 60 pence, so that there was a differential protective duty of 2 per cent. in favour of the Indian manufacturer. The Secretary for India would have avoided many difficulties if he had consulted the Lancashire manufacturers. The right hon. Gentleman said that as a rule the richer classes in India used the finer qualities of cloth, and the poor used the coarser qualities. From careful observation in India he should say that the finer qualities were used in the turban, medium qualities were worn round the loins, and coarser qualittes were used in the home. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of the "voice of India," but it was not expressed by any public assembly like the House of Commons. What did our Chancellor of the Exchequer do when he wanted to raise money with the sanction of this House? Did he impose taxes on the food or clothing of the people? No; he levied the required increase on the accumulations of the rich and the trades that were doing well, He denied that the possibilities of taxation in India had been exhausted. During the last few years the Income Tax had been reduced 35 per cent., and all incomes from 200 to 500 rupees had been exempted. Sir John Strachey in 1888 wrote that the tendency of the Indian authorities was by indirect taxation rather to levy burdens on the poor than by direct taxation to obtain supplies from the rich. The land tax was simply a rent of the land, and was only 1-5th of the letting value and only 1-24th of the total profits. This was a fact which the agriculturalists of this country might well ponder over. The Excise Duties were also considerably lower than ours, and, according to Sir Charles Bernard, of the India Office, and Sir Griffith Evans, one of the most prominent members of the Indian Council, death duties were not only possible but desirable in India, and would be an additional source of revenue. In this country when the Government wanted revenue they taxed a prosperous industry. This was done by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his last Budget, but in India it was the very reverse, and the consequence was the Government taxed the cotton industry, although they must, or ought to have known, that it deserved every protection. It was said that in this matter Lancashire was greedy. He rebutted that charge with indignation. The Lancashire Members were not fighting for themselves, but for the millions of Lancashire operatives. At the present time in Blackburn and North-east Lancashire there were 35,000 looms idle in the various districts, and charitable organisations were distributing food and doing what they could to prevent the populace from starving. The unemployed of Lancashire did not want relief, but a permanent extention of markets and openings for their goods in all parts of the world. The interests of Lancashire were indissolubly bound up with the interests of India. It would be a short-sighted and suicidal policy for Lancashire to attempt to injure India, but although India suffered from the fall in the exchange there was no reason why Lancashire should pay for the deficit which the Indian Exchequer suffered from at present. Lancashire Members would continue to agitate against these Duties in season and out of season. They had no wish to be unreasonable, but they must look after the interests of their own people. They urged that the duties should be equalised and assimilated, and that India should be taxed in exactly the same manner as Lancashire.

*MR. G. J. GOSCHEN (St. George's, Hanover Square): In the few observations with which I shall trouble the House I do not wish to pledge a single Member who sits in any quarter of the House; I speak merely in my individual capacity. I deeply regret that we are deprived to-night of the presence of my right hon. Friend the Member for East Manchester, who, had he been present, would have been able to place before the House, with his convincing power, the views on this matter which he expressed with great ability and moderation at Manchester not very long ago. Although I wish to emphasise the fact that I am speaking merely for myself, I must say that I speak from a very strong conviction indeed. It is much to be regretted that the course of Indian Legislation should have brought us to this point. We see on the one side a very decided opinion in India, and on the other side a very decided opinion in Lancashire. We have, on the one hand, India in financial straits, seeking how to make both ends meet, believing that there are few other sources of taxation left to her, and very jealous as to the manner in which this Assembly will conduct her interests; on the other hand we see an industry in Lancashire depressed, finding it difficult to hold its own at the present time, and entitled to the greatest regard of this House. My right hon. Friend the Member for Bury was not only justified, but was, I think, doing good to his constituents in bringing this important matter before the House, and, though there are differences of opinion on both sides of the House, nevertheless it is best that this matter should be argued out upon the floor of the House, and that neither in Lancashire nor in India should there be any doubt as to the spirit in which we approach this question. In what spirit do we approach it? For my own part, I must say that I felt deeply the appeal that was made to us by the Secretary of State for India when he reminded us that we were not only representatives of our own constituents, but that this House was the trustee for that great Empire of India, for the prosperity of which we shall be held responsible. That is a responsibility which up to this time, I hope, we have discharged in the face of the world with disinterestedness. and it would be a thousand pities if on some question of importance—but still not one of paramount importance—we should give the impression either to our Indian fellow-subjects or to the world that those principles of disinterestedness which have been at the foundation of our rule in India are no longer to be the guiding principle of the Government of this country. I know how a question of this kind would be decided by other countries; there are some countries who, when they found themselves face to face with a question which interested their fellow-subjects at home and their colonists abroad, would decide very quickly on the selfish course. This country, I hope, will act in a different spirit. The Secretary of State for India has quoted from the Debate that took place in the Lords, and in which, as he said, there spoke ex-Viceroys of India, ex-Secretaries of State for India, and Lord Roberts, who was thoroughly competent to judge of Indian matters, and he produced evidence which, had he not produced, it would have been my duty to place before the House, that questions of this kind deeply interested the masses of India, and that these feelings cannot be brushed aside by any statements that this is an agitation got up simply by a limited class in India. The right hon. Member for Bury stated the case with the greatest possible moderation, but I admit that I regret one passage of his speech, based, I think, on some observations which I myself had seen in a pamphlet which has been circulated, to the effect that it was the Anglo-Indian feeling in India which was hostile to Lancashire. The pamphlet went a little further—it seemed to convey the impression that those men in India, upon whose capacity and upon whose impartiality and honesty our rule depends, had either been deceived, or cajoled, or influenced by a small class of Bombay millowners. I should be sorry that this House should feel that a charge like that should lie against those to whom we confide the interests of our fellow-subjects. We have to show to the world that the men we send to govern India are straightforward men. We try to send to India from this country the best Administrators we can select, men who are superior to prejudice and who will have a judgment of their own. Yet a doubt has been thrown upon a class but for whom we should not be able to hold India. We hold India just because we send out our best men to govern her. I am not one of those who believe that you can give European Institutions to India—such assemblies as we have here. I do not believe the Indian mind is constituted like ours, and hon. Members opposite might imagine that I and others who think with me are belated in our views as to how India should be governed. But in proportion as I hold that India is not fit for such representative institutions I feel strongly that we are bound in duty to listen to the voice of the Indian people on questions affecting their interests. We have on the one side, powerful representations which deserve the most respectful consideration; and, on the other hand, we have representations from India. How ought we to treat the representation from India? Surely not simply as those of officials? In a question of this kind the voice of India must be heard. We cannot do otherwise in this House than listen carefully to those whom we send to that country with the very object of representing Indian opinion and interests to us, and we ought to extend to their advice the greatest respect. The Council of India are against the exemption of these Cotton Duties, and we cannot altogether push aside their advice because we have constituted that Council in order to be guided by them. The Secretary of State for India has said that he is bound to look mainly after the interests of India, and that he has also considered the interests of Lancashire. But it is not only the Secretary of State for India who is responsible, the whole Cabinet are responsible, for they might have over-ruled, or attempted to over-rule, the right hon. Gentleman if they thought that the question had not been sufficiently considered. There are two aspects in which this question might be regarded. In one respect, it is one of the largest questions that can be brought before this House, and in another respect, it may be shown to be a small question. The large question is the effect which an adverse Vote of this House to-night might have. One expression has been used by the Secretary of State for India to-night which I do not think he was entitled to use, unless he was deeply convinced that he ought to use it. He spoke of danger. It was a very serious thing for the right hon. Gentleman to say that the adoption of a particular course towards India—a course which many of the right hon. Gentleman's own Party are prepared to support—would involve danger to that Empire, and it is a statement that cannot be ignored. I am not at all sure but what the speeches made by Lord Lansdowne, Lord Northbrook, and Lord Roberts—I do not say Lord Kimberley, because he is a colleague of the right hon. Gentleman—were of a character to support that declaration. It is not, therefore, a question of confidence in the Government, or a question of Party. When we are told that any particular involves danger to India, danger to Lancashire and its industries, danger to every industry in this country, danger to our power, we should sink every consideration of Party, every consideration of particular interests, and should range ourselves boldly on the side of the Executive Government. Now, let me look at it from the smaller aspect. What is the exact point of my right hon. Friend? What is it that we should vote against if the opportunity were given us of voting against any particular proposal? Is it against the imposition of these Import Duties at all, or is it against the particular form in which the Government have arranged the Excise? Is it that the Government have arranged the Excise Duties on an unsatisfactory basis, and that, therefore, while they are strongly committed against any protective system that, nevertheless, a protective system will be established? Is that the main grievance of the Members from Manchester, because we have not got it perfectly clear? One thing is to condemn these Import Duties altogether; a second is to condemn Import Duties on cotton goods; and a third is not to condemn Import Duties on cotton goods alone, but because that is imperfectly rectified by the Excise system introduced by the right hon. Gentleman. I know that many of my Friends consider that the right hon. Gentleman, notwithstanding the able speech which he made, inadequately satisfied them on that particular point. There are questions of detail connected with yarns in which it is thought that the Excise, which he has established, does not really meet the case. Then, what ought to be done? There ought to be a conference of all those who are interested to endeavour to remove this difficulty. Are such great national powers, I might almost say, as Lancashire and India, to be put in antagonism because they cannot agree on the details of a tariff? I gathered that the right hon. Gentleman was prepared to make it absolutely clear to the representatives of Manchester that he has carried out the policy, to which his Government is absolutely pledged, that there should be no protective influence whatever in these Duties. I feel that there has not been sufficient co-operation between Indian finance and English finance in the past. I might have been tempted on an occasion such as this, if the Motion had been cast in a different character, to say that we were entitled to ask from Her Majesty's Government that they should never have brought us to the present position of antagonism between Lancashire and India. The right hon. Gentleman has had a good many months in which to deal with this question. He must have known the feeling in Lancashire. I cannot deny the courage of the right hon. Gentleman. I think he took a courageous view. But what he has not done is this—he has not brought the contending parties sufficiently together. Now, I should have wished that even at this last moment it would have been possible to effect, I will not say a compromise, but something in the nature of an armistice, for the sake of negotiations which should be carried on. Is it really beyond the limits of the statesmanship of India and this country combined to find no other alternative than these Import Duties; and should it not be possible to deal otherwise with Indian finance than by bringing about this serious antagonism which we all so much regret. Whatever may be the result of the division to-night—whether the Government succeed or whether they do not—I think that this Debate ought to be followed by an endeavour on the part of the Government to see whether they cannot bring Indian opinion and Manchester opinion closer together. But what is to be the effect of the present vote? If it was simply that the Government Excise is unsatisfactory and that it ought to be remedied, I think I should vote with the right hon. Member for Bury, in order to bring them to a better understanding of their position. But I look upon it that this vote is not simply a vote as to the tariff. We must look to the effect on India, when the decision of the House has been telegraphed there. If we were to treat this simply as voting against the Government because we consider that the Excise is imperfect, I think, speaking for myself, that that vote would be misinterpreted in India. So far as I am concerned, I would not risk, as a representative for India as well as the representative of St. George's, Hanover Square, that my vote should be so misinterpreted. India has an overwhelming feeling on this point, and in these circumstances I cannot think I should be doing my duty if I gave a silent vote upon this occasion. Every Member in every part of the House will feel what he considers to be his duty in the circumstances. The Government will do wrong if they look upon this simply as a vote regarding their own conduct and administration. They would do wrong if they were to take advantage of the feeling of those who think so much of the sentiment of India, and if they were simply to construe it as an expression of confidence in themselves. I care not how my vote is interpreted one way or the other as regards Party. What I want is that India should thoroughly understand that in this House, on both sides, there is a determination that Indian feeling should be considered as much as the feeling of any part of the country.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): I should have been disposed to rise later had it not been for the gravity of the speech of the right hon. Gentleman. I hope there never will be wanting in this country men responsible for the prosperity of this great Empire, of which India, perhaps, forms the greatest part, who will be wanting in courage to take that line which in their deepest conviction is necessary for the security of both. The right hon. Gentleman deserves all the credit that can be given for the language he has used. He may depend upon it that he shall hear from us nothing that will in any respect prevent that reconciliation of the great interests of this country and of India of which he has expressed himself so ardently desirous. I must be permitted to claim also for Her Majesty's Government that it is in that spirit that we have acted. Sometimes in the heat of Party debate it has been contended that the Government are actuated only by electioneering designs, with the object of catching votes, and to secure their political and Party position. Do you suppose that when the Cabinet came to a decision on this momentous subject that they were actuated by such considerations? Do you think that they were not fully aware of the difficulties they would create in Lancashire? Do you think that they did not know that they were placing many of their supporters in a very difficult position, that they were risking many votes which might be of importance at the next General Election? But this I will say, that the Government never hesitated for one single moment in taking that decision which they believed was necessary for the interests of India, whatever effect that decision might have upon their Party and political future. I am not disposed to go at length into this subject, which has been dealt with in full, I may say splendidly, by my right hon. Friend, who has shown himself worthy of holding one of the highest positions that can be held by an English statesman. I can only repeat what he has said as to his anxiety to consider any representations that may be made as to the protective effect of the countervailing Duties. If the feeling in Lancashire is as bitter as the right hon. Gentleman, the Member for Bury, has described, there must have been a great falling off in the tone of the county. But I hold in my hand a speech which is worthier of Lancashire than that of the right hon. Gentleman. It is a speech in which the President of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce says that there has been very great exaggeration as to the effect of those Duties on the trade of Lancashire, and urges that there should be no continuance of an agitation unworthy of that county. He had seen in a newspaper what he regarded as a very exaggerated statement as to the effect of this Duty upon the Lancashire trade, and he then goes on to mention especially the question of a continuous agitation in Lancashire, and I call attention to these words because I think they are worthy of the President of the Chamber of Commerce. He said :—

> "He had heard it stated that there was to be continuous agitation against these Duties, and that they objected to them *in toto*. He did not pretend to think that any word he could say would have any influence outside, but no word he could say would be strong enough to express his desire to persuade those who were responsible for the agitation to cease. It was not worthy of the great fame of Lancashire, of its self-reliance, its stateliness, its stability, or its solidness. What was the use of continuing an agitation which could not possibly be fruitful of good, and might possibly be productive of serious harm, for it could not fail to cause irritation and annoyance in our great dependency—a dependency to which Lancashire owed so much of her prosperity during the last 20 years, to which she owed so much now, and to which she would owe much for centuries to come."

I venture to say that language like this, coming from a leading representative of Lancashire, is worthy of that great county and the great industries in it. The Government are quite ready to meet this issue. If it should be their fate to fall, there is no cause in which a Government could more worthily fall; but I should most deeply regret if the vote of the House of Commons was to establish a feeling of irritation between Lancashire and India, and should leave upon the mind of that great population, for whose welfare we are responsible, a lasting sense that justice is not to be expected from the English House of Commons.

*LORD GEORGE HAMILTON (Middlesex, Ealing) said, that about 20 years ago, when the agitation commenced for the repeal of the Cotton Duties, he was the representative of the Indian Department and the exponent of the policy of the Government of that day in this House, and, therefore, he hoped the House would excuse him if he occupied its attention for a few minutes before the Debate came to a close. The right hon. Gentleman, the Secretary of State, had reversed the policy which the House of Commons, 20 years ago, deliberately adopted. He was about to embark in troubles and disturbance of which he had little conception. Now, the views which he himself held 20 years ago as to the impolicy of imposing Cotton Duties upon English goods he held still, and the distinguished Chief under whom he then had the honour of serving, Lord Salisbury, held the same views still. When the former agitation went on against these Duties, and deputation after deputation of Members of Parliament came to the India Office to urge the injustice of the taxation to which they and their constituents were subjected, those responsible at the India Office looked most carefully into the situation, and found they could not meet the objectors in argument. The present Secretary of State for India was an able and distinguished man, but he must recollect that the two men who determined upon the abolition of the Indian Cotton Duties were men of the very highest distinction and authority in their respective spheres both of thought and of action—namely, Sir Louis Mallet and Lord Salisbury. The Secretary of State had quoted the name of Cobden, but the name of Mallet in this matter stood higher than that of Cobden. Sir L. Mallet, who during the earlier part of his life successfully devoted himself to breaking down the hostile tariffs of foreign countries, during the latter part of it no less successfully devoted himself to establishing a unity of interest in this question between England and her great dependency. Now, the grounds upon which at that time they arrived at the absolute necessity of abolishing these Duties were twofold. First, the tax was an unfair tax as far as Lancashire was concerned, and that was part of the question to which Sir Louis Mallet specially devoted his attention. Lord Salisbury looked at the question from another aspect altogether. He arrived at the conclusion that these Duties ought to be abolished on the ground that their imposition was a subject of dangerous contention—dangerous to the stability of our Government in India. It was in that view that they induced the House of Commons to assent to their policy. The agitation was bitterly fought. The Duke of Argyll, then one of the leaders of the Liberal Party, and the late Mr. Fawcett fought stubbornly against their policy, but the upshot was, so conclusive was the argument, that the Government of the day were able to pass a Resolution with the unanimous assent of this House, for the abolition of the Cotton Duties.

Two years after that a Resolution was assented to by the House of Commons, from which all mention of Protection was obliterated, showing that it was the intention that these Import Duties should be abolished. A change of Government took place. The Member for Midlothian came into Office. In the meantime, all Duties which were in any sense protective had been removed. They had arrived at a higher quality of cotton goods. The last relic of those Import Duties was abolished. That was the policy deliberately arrived at after long consideration; and now, in the middle of a dull Recess, without giving that House an opportunity of discussion, without consulting any Representatives from Lancashire, and contrary to what he believed was the understanding these Duties were suddenly imposed. What was the plea? There was danger. Well, he recollected a year ago, when there was an Indian Loan Bill before the House, the Chancellor of the Exchequer informed them that if the Bill did not pass India would be bankrupt. He had been long connected with the administration of India, and he knew something about India. He agreed that they should listen sympathetically to the voice of India, but if they wanted to hear the view of India, Bombay and Calcutta were not the places where they would hear it. Those Europeanised cities did not represent India, and the peculiarity of modern India was, that certain sections of those two capitals, having adopted Western ideas, had developed with singular skill the methods of agitation. The result was, that there was no country on the face of the world where the shrinking units of society could make themselves so well heard, and where the millions were so quiescent as in India. He knew the gentlemen who got up the agitation. Let the right hon. Gentleman propose an Income Tax, and he would very soon find out that there was much more danger in the Income Tax than in dealing with cotton. They were always opposed to any taxation of any sort that touched themselves, and when there was any difficulty, the remedy was to tax cotton or raise the Salt Duty. The most important part of the speech of the right hon. Gentleman was that in which he gave his reasons for the necessity of these Duties. The deficiency which existed last year had been increased by the fall in exchange from 1s. 2d. to 1s. 1d. The Government had resolutely refused to listen to any suggestion made from any quarter for the reform of the currency. Lancashire and India were opposed to the Cotton Duties. They were united on the currency question, but their united appeals had been in vain. The Government, having refused the proposals of the Indian Government for a Conference, resorted to the remedy of closing the Mints to the manufacture of silver, by which they attempted to give an artificial value to the rupee for purposes of exchange. For that purpose the Mints were closed, and the closing of the Mints was a quack remedy which reduced the price of silver all over the world. The merit claimed for it was that it would insure the rupee's remaining at 1s. 3d. for purposes of exchange; but the rupee had fallen to 1s. 1d., and in consequence of that fall the Government were now imposing Duties upon cotton goods imported into India. Was this the only remedy open to them? If it was, and if silver should continue to fall, then this 5 per cent. duty would not be sufficient to meet the deficiency, and the Government would have to keep on increasing the Duty. It was, therefore, necessary at the outset of this policy to protest strongly against a measure which must result in the erection of a heavy hostile barrier against the importation of cotton goods into India. The Secretary of State for India had made a very candid and conciliatory speech, and he understood the right hon. Gentleman to undertake to eliminate from his plan anything approaching or resembling protection. The right hon. Gentleman had also said that he had safeguarded the interests of Lancashire by the imposition of an Excise Duty. But had he really done what he thought? For his part, he disbelieved altogether in the efficiency of an Excise Duty for the purpose. The opinion of those who considered this question 20 years ago was that the imposition of Excise Duties in India could not be viewed as a satisfactory method of taxation, and the reason was that in India there was not a reliable official machinery for the purposes of investigation and taxation. Judging from the experience supplied by the past, he held that there was very little likelihood of this proposed Excise Duty being enforced and fulfilling the purpose for which it was intended. He would test the right hon. Gentleman's undertaking to reconsider any part of his scheme which could be shown to savour of protection. The foundation of the legislation of the right hon. Gentleman was that the price of American cotton was 4d. a pound, or a penny above the price of Indian cotton. But supposing that it could be purchased at 3d., the coarse goods manufactured out of it could compete with the coarser goods made in India. If this should prove to be the case, would the right hon. Gentleman put an Excise Duty on the coarse goods in India so that the Lancashire goods might not be handicapped by the import duty? Then, why was Excise Duty to be levied upon yarn and Customs Duty upon cloth? Surely, considering the difference in value between yarn and cloth, that amounted to Protection. The right hon. Gentleman, the Secretary for India, adopted a very high doctrine when he said we ought to pay very special attention to the wishes of India. He agreed that they should not ignore India's rights and claims, but if they were always to pay attention to the wishes of India the position would be a very difficult one. The right hon. Gentleman asked if they would attempt to deal with any great self-governing Colony on the same principle as it was proposed to apply to India. There was no point of resemblance between India and a self-governing Colony. Self-governing Colonies were self-supporting and self-maintaining. The Government of India was neither the one nor the other, and only lived on the moral and material support which it derived from England. If they deprived the Indian Government of the financial, material and military assistance it derived from England it would fall into a state of inanition and collapse. England had paid a heavy tax, both in blood and in money, for having set up that Government. She had to maintain a military establishment enormously in excess of what would otherwise be required. She had to keep 60,000 or 70,000 young English soldiers in India, and the difference between the death-rate which occurred amongst them and those quartered in this country was some indication of the price in blood she had to pay. He did not contend that England should make a selfish use of her rights; but, at the same time, hon. Members had a right to maintain, inasmuch as the Government of India was supported and maintained by England, that the Government of this country should take care that India did not set up a fiscal system hostile to vast interests in this country, and which could not be tolerated in this country. Therefore, he considered they had a perfect right to express their opinion upon this new course the Government of India had taken, and to impress both upon the House and the country the injustice of the Duties thus suddenly imposed. He sincerely hoped that by means other than agitation these Duties might be either amended or repealed, for he should much regret if they were carried simply by political agitation, either inside or outside the House, and so create that feeling of annoyance and agitation in India which it was so desirable to prevent, and by which the foundation of our Government in India might be seriously shaken. He did not know whether the right hon. Gentleman who moved the Motion for the Adjournment would be satisfied with the statement made by the Secretary of State for India, but if he decided to divide on the question, then he should be happy to vote with him. The Secretary for India and the Chancellor of the Exchequer seemed to think that a great Party vote was to be taken, and that on this question of Cotton Duties an attempt was to be made to turn out the Government. The speeches from the Opposition side of the House, he thought, must have effectually disposed of any such notion. Twelve years ago they abolished Cotton Duties, and now they had been reimposed. He regretted this, and if a Division was taken, he should vote with the right hon. Gentleman who had moved the Adjournment as a protest against the inaction of the Government upon the currency question, which had led to hasty action as regarded the imposition of the Cotton Duties, and also as a protest against the unwisdom and unfairness of putting the whole burden of sustaining the solvency of the Indian Government upon the shoulders of an already very depressed industry.

Mr. D. NAOROJI (Finsbury, Central) said, that some of the speakers had stated that this country incurred great expense in the maintenance of a large army for India. But did England spend a single farthing in connection with India? For hon. Gentlemen to stand up and say they were maintaining the Indian Empire was something extraordinary. For the two hundred years during which she had been connected with India, this country had not spent a single farthing either in the acquisition or the maintenance of that Empire. Were he a rebel at heart, he should welcome this Motion with delight. Motions such as this would increase the feelings of dissatisfaction and irritation among the Indian people. Hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House called themselves Unionists, but if they allowed this Motion to pass, they would intensify the feeling of irritation and dissatisfaction which, after all, was the greatest weakness of their British rule in India. They might have a stronger and a larger army—at India's expense—but the stability of their Government depended entirely upon the satisfaction of the people and the justice shown towards them. However just they might be, still in regard to India, this country was like a stepmother. Children might submit to any amount of oppression from their own mother, but from a stepmother they would demand always the strictest justice, the slightest departure from which would deprive her of their affection. England was, after all, an alien country, ruling over great masses of people in the Indian Empire, and if they did not consult the feelings of these people, a very grave mistake would be committed. He would appeal to the Home Rulers and ask them if they did not mean Home Rule to be on the basis of the integrity of the Empire, and not the disruption of the Empire. He could not conceive a more Separatist Motion than this. He could count, he was sure, on the votes of the Home Rulers, and he expected the support of the Unionists if they were really true to Unionism. If this Motion were passed, it was within the bounds of possibility that hon. Members would wake up some morning and find a terrible state of affairs in India, similar to that of 1857. From the bottom of his heart he desired that British rule in India might last a long time; but hon. Gentlemen must recollect they were dealing with 300 millions of people. He begged them not to so act to-night that a telegram would go to India to-morrow morning saying that this Motion had been passed. The feeling of injustice in India was very strong, however much hon. Members might make light of the opinions of the Indian people. India's leading men were regarded as agitators. What were the occupants of the Treasury Bench? Did they not go up and down the country endeavouring to educate the people, or to disseminate their own opinions? It was by peaceful agitation that British India was to be preserved. This was too grave an occasion on which to indulge in any taunt, or else he might show how this was not the first time that Lancashire had tried to force the hands of the Government to do things which were most irritating to the Indian people. In 1700 an Act was passed against Indian goods coming here; and when Lancashire began to produce goods, similar to those of India, they stopped the sale here of Indian goods altogether. People talked of the enormous Manchester trade with India. There was no such enormous trade, unless it could be said that a trade amounting to 1s. 6d. per head of the Indian people was an enormous trade. He appealed to the House not to let a telegram go to India in the morning to the effect that this Motion had been passed, as the effect on the people would be most irritating. The Secretary of State had promised that he would do all he could to relieve the duty of any protective character. With that assurance hon. Members ought to be satisfied.

Sir FREDERICK MILNER (Notts, Bassetlaw) said, he believed that if the Motion were carried it would have a most injurious effect, and therefore as he had never given a dishonest vote in the House, he felt constrained to support the Government on this occasion. It had been laid down on behalf of the Government in the course of the Debate on the Address, that to vote with a political party, different from the Party to which one belonged, meant to associate oneself with that Party. Now, he should very much dislike it to be supposed that because he went into the Lobby with the Government, he was in any sense a supporter of the Government. He looked upon the Government as a most pernicious Government, politically, and he disclaimed altogether the notion, that because he was going to support them now, he was in any way condoning their Separatist intentions.

Motion made, and Question put—"That the House do now adjourn:"—*(Sir Henry James.)*

The House divided:—Ayes, 109, Nos. 304. (Division No. 10.)

SEED POTATOES SUPPLY (IRELAND)—REMUNERATION.

Resolution reported—

"That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of remuneration to any Inspectors that may be appointed under any Act of the present Session to provide for the supply of Seed Potatoes to Occupiers and Cultivators of Land in Ireland."

Resolution agreed to.

JARVIS' CHARITY (STAUNTON-ON-WYE, &c.).

Motion made, and Question proposed—

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her to be graciously pleased to withhold Her consent from the Scheme of the Charity Commissioners relating to the Charity of George Jarvis to the inhabitants of the parishes of Staunton-on-Wye, Letton, and Bredwardine, in the county of Hereford, which Scheme is now before Parliament:"—*(Mr. Rankin)*.

The hon. Member contended that the Scheme was against the will of the founder and the wishes of the beneficiaries, against the justice of the case, and impracticable to be carried out as it now stood, and many other schemes might be found that did not take the money from the inhabitants connected with the Charity. The income of the Charity had been spent upon clothing, fuel and medical attendance, and also upon schooling. It was true that schooling was not mentioned in the original will; but for some time £225 a year had been spent upon schooling, and the rest for the benefit of the poor inhabitants of the three parishes. The scheme now proposed cut down those purposes, except the schooling, to £946 a year, instead of £2,290. Adding what was allowed by the Charity Commissioners for school purposes, namely £350, to the £946 allowed for non-educational purposes, there was a total of £1,296, which was £1,219 less than the parishes had in 1822. The other property of this Charity had also been diverted against the will of the founder and certainly against the wishes of the beneficiaries. He held in his hand a resolution of the newly-formed Parish Council of Taunton-on-Wye strongly protesting against this scheme, which took away £1,400 from the inhabitants of the three parishes. A good deal had been said about charities being managed by Parish Councils; let those who had advocated this put their doctrines into practice by supporting Parish Councils which now stood up for the rights of the people. A petition had been sent to the Education Department signed by 480 adults, who were nearly all the persons entitled to benefit under the Charity. They complained bitterly that they had not been consulted, as they ought to have been, about a matter so closely affecting themselves. A good deal of correspondence had passed between the Trustees, the Charity Commissioners, and the Education Department, but there had been no consultation with the people who were immediately concerned. He appealed to the House on the justice of the case. To him it appeared to be fundamental that so long as a bequest could be morally and legally applied, so long as it did no harm, so long it ought not to be diverted from the uses specified by the founder. If confidence were once shaken, and if it were found that bequests left for particular purposes would be diverted to others, then the fountains of charity would be dried up and the poor would suffer. He quoted figures refuting the suggestion that the Scheme had had a bad effect by causing a rush of needy persons into the parishes. The recipients of the Charity regarded what they received not as charity, but their just due, and money which had been left to them. It was said to be an impracticable Scheme. Last year the income was £2,675, and the expenditure £2,203, leaving a balance of £472. If instructors in cookery and laundry work were appointed and paid out of the funds there would be a deficit of £313. This could only be met by cutting down what had been given to the poor and "skimping" them in every way. Other plans might be submitted. Many things might be done with the £14,000. In Staunton-on-Wye was an excellent building which might be utilised as a school of technical instruction for boys and girls. It might be used also as a convalescent hospital, to admit, perhaps, inmates from the whole of the county, which was very much wanted in Herefordshire. It might be used usefully, perhaps, in a scheme for establishing old age pensions. He appealed to the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education to make some concession to them in the matter. He thought the Charity Commissioners might well pause before they severed this £14,000 from these three parishes. He urged, too, that the parishes should have a greater representation on the governing body. At present there was only one representative from each of the three parishes on the governing body, and he thought there should be at least double that number.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley) said, the case of the hon. Member for Herefordshire was simply that the poor of the three parishes named, should be allowed to have and enjoy their own property. The matter was not one of local concern only. It was another of the numerous schemes which had been brought forward by the Charity Commissioners for years past, to deprive the poor of the possession of funds which absolutely belonged to them, and the fact ought to bring shame to those who proposed the schemes. He was sorry to hear the hon. Member say something about concession, the matter was not one for concession, and none would be accepted. He hoped the House would not permit the real point of issue to be confused by details. The point was whether this sum of £14,000 left to the poor of the parishes referred to should be taken away from them in order to found some grand scheme of higher education for the county of Hereford. The intention of the donor in this case was singularly clear. He expressly laid down that none of the money should be spent in buildings, yet in 1850 the Trustees got a Bill through Parliament for the building of a large palatial school for higher education, costing £20,000. The Trustees had also been putting aside £500 or £600 a year out of the Charity, for the maintenance of the school, and the consequence of this shameless confiscation was that while years ago the widows, the infirm and the worn-out labourers of those three parishes received £10 a year from the Charity, the funds were now so reduced that they received only the miserable pittance of 8d. per week, and if the Scheme proposed was adopted the charity would be still further reduced. He was glad to be able to say that the wealthy and influential classes of the district, to their honour, declined to accept the proposed scheme of higher education if it were based on the confiscation of money that belonged to the poor. It had been the custom of the Charity Commissioners when they saw any property which could possibly be devoted to the purposes of higher education never to rest until they got it into their hands, and in this way scheme after scheme had been brought forward by them since 1850. At times there had been agitation against those schemes; then they were withdrawn for a while, but always to be brought up again. Hon. Members would be told no doubt by the Vice-President that there were good features in the present Scheme. Yes there were. The poor people were graciously permitted to have a small portion of their property. He hoped the House would take a decided stand in this case, and that it would show its strong disapproval of a course of action which for years past had worked great misery, privation, and wrong doing towards the poorer classes of the country. They might be told also that under the Endowed Schools Act the Charity Commissioners had no power to apply this money to old age pensions. That might be so, but they were not obliged to take the money away from the poor; for they might leave it to furnish the 8d. a week to them, or to assist them in other ways. They would be told that the Trustees were favourable to the Scheme. But if that argument was to be advanced he would ask the Vice President to read the letter of the Trustees of May 4th 1894, which distinctly stated that although they themselves were willing to accept a modification of the Scheme, they would not guarantee that the modification would be accepted by those locally interested. They were told that the Commissioners always paid attention to the public opinion of the locality. In this case they were going dead against it; and nothing would influence them to forsake the objectionable policy that they had adopted. The Charity Commionners should be told, and he hoped they would be told by the vote of the House that the public feeling of England would no longer be outraged by this spoliation of the property of the poor, and that they must give in to the expressed will of the people. If even the Socialist or Collectivist policy, which meant the confiscation of other people's property, should be in the ascendant, those who advocated it would be able to point to the action of the Charity Commissioners as a justification of their conduct. Looking at the winter they had gone through, when this small income might have brought some comfort to the poorer classes of these three parishes. He hoped the House would not be led away by any argument in favour of details, but would vote on the general principle, and decide that the property of the poor was considered by the House to be as sacred as the property of any other class.

*MR. CYRIL J. S. DODD (Essex, Maldon) desired that the House might reject the Scheme and establish a precedent which he hoped the Charity Commissioners would take to heart. Liberals were bound to condemn the Scheme, because they had recently been passing legislation to enable parishes to control their own affairs, including to some extent their charities. About £14,000 or perhaps £17,000—would be taken from the three villages to which that sum belonged, and to which, under the will of the founder, it was left for benefiting the poor. The inhabitants in meetings had denounced the scheme, the Parish Councils of the villages had condemned it. The Officials of the Charity Commission framed it. It should be rejected for its own defaults, and as a precedent for future schemes. There was ample scope for this sum if it remained in the villages; and he regarded the Scheme as one which really showed the mischievous policy of giving the Charity Commissioners a free hand.

*THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. A. H. D. ACLAND, York, W. R., Rotherham) said, the income under this scheme was about £2,500 a year, and was divided under an order of the Court of Chancery, into two parts—one was the non-educational part and the other the educational part; and however much they might wish to make one part larger at the expense of the other, it would be impossible to do so as the law stood now. Roughly speaking one was about £1,000 and the other £1,500, and the method in which the non-educational part was spent at present was in providing doles in kind and through the medical officer, £320; clothing, £120; coals, £128; nursing, £128; medical officer and drugs, £248. One of the first things they were asked to do was to secure this money and obtain good interest for it, which was readily done, and no doubt to the satisfaction of the Trustees and everybody else, as it was invested in India 3 per cents. What were the proposals now? First of all there were the schools. The three village schools were for three parishes which, according to the Charity Commissioners' scheme, were to have £250 a year in addition to the grants which they earned from the Department. The Trustees asked that the £250 should be increased to £350, which he willingly consented to do, and the income of the day school now was approximately £4 per child, which was about double the cost of that in an ordinarily good Board School. A special provision was made for technical education by technical instructors in agriculture, cookery, and laundry work, to which he did not think his hon. Friends opposite or anybody else would object. That might cost about £300. Then there was a sum of £450 which was spent for repairs, and some further items which brought the amount up to about £1,100. Thus £1,000 a year was spent in non-educational charity, and about £1,100 a year on education on a population of not quite 1,000. The idea of the Scheme was that that was sufficient to meet the wishes of the district, and when it was before the Education Department he admitted that there was no very strong expression of opinion to the contrary from any large number of the people. The real pivot of difficulty was the £385 a year which one clause in the Scheme proposed to give to county scholars. If those scholarships were distributed at the rate of £20 a year for three years, there would not, after all, be a great number of county scholars, and considering the principle which underlay a matter of this sort, the money might very fairly be kept in the parish, and not distributed over the county, where it would not have very much effect. These matters were questions of degree really, and not questions of principle. If they were not, the London Polytechnics would not have been established. When the City parishes became emptied of the poor the charities of those parishes were transferred to the general benefit of London, and the Polytechnics were founded. He thought the best course in this case would be to preserve all the main features of the Scheme, and that an Amendment should be made as to the county scholar part of it. He did not think the hon. Gentleman opposite wished to destroy the arrangement for the schools and the technical instructors, or the settlement as to the £980 for the non-educational part. If consent were withheld from the county part of the Scheme, the only part which took any money outside the parish, that would be hung up for the time being and would be considered with a view to the money being devoted in some way more satisfactory to the people of the place; and that part of the Scheme which was satisfactory might be allowed to pass. That was the suggestion he should make to the hon. Member for Herefordshire.

MR. M. BIDDULPH (Herefordshire, Ross) thought it was a great pity that the inhabitants of the parish were not consulted. If that had been done it would have been found that there was every disposition to meet the requirements of the Commissioners. There was a large building erected, saving thousands of pounds, and he could not help saying that very little consideration was shown to the inhabitants of the parishes whose desire was that the money should be spent in a manner conducive not only to the benefit of the parishes, but the surrounding neighbourhood. He hoped the House would not allow this Scheme to pass and so permit further delay to take place.

*MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith) said, if he were to offer any advice—there was no reason why his hon. Friend should take it, he spoke only for himself—he would say that he thought opposition should not proceed further after what had fallen from the Vice President of the Council. He considered that the proposal he had made was a very fair proposal. He understood that his hon. Friend was desirous of increasing the amount spent in eleemosynary purposes.

MR. BIDDULPH: To maintain it.

MR. J. W. LOWTHER: The scheme as it stands maintains it. It placed the £1,000 a year in a safer position than it was at the present time; but if his hon. Friend wished to increase the sum he did not think he could do it by rejecting this scheme. This sum at present might be spent in eleemosynary grants or not; but this Scheme made it certain that it would be spent in the future. The whole amount diverted from these three parishes would be a sum of £385 a year, which was to be laid aside to be dealt with in a future scheme; but the Vice President of the Council had made a proposal to the House—namely, that this sum should accumulate for a certain number of years. The Charity Commissioners, the Education Department, the Parish Councils of the locality, the County Council—all, if given further time for the consideration of this matter, would, in the end, be in a better position to arrive at a just conclusion as to the way in which the money could best be spent. He thought, therefore, that the proposal of the Vice

President was a fair one, and that the House might reasonably assent to it. The rejection of this Scheme would not help forward in the least the projects of the right hon. Member for Bordesley and the hon. Member for Hereford. At present the Charity was governed, not by a scheme of the Charity Commissioners, but by an Act of Parliament passed in 1852. The apportionment of the Charity Fund was effected under that Act, and that apportionment must continue until altered by another Act of Parliament. Considering the amount of Legislation which already awaited their attention, and realising what divergent views prevailed in that House respecting these Charity Schemes, he thought they could hardly hope to pass a Bill dealing with this subject in the present Session. As he had said, if the Scheme now proposed should, unfortunately, be rejected, the views of his hon. Friend behind him and of the right hon. Member for Bordesley, would not be furthered in any way; if, on the other hand, the proposal of the Minister should be accepted, it would be still possible to deal with the subject on a future occasion, when, probably, more light would have been thrown upon it.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.) observed, that the hon. Member who had just sat down had said that a division had been made in this Charity under an Act passed in 1852. That was true, but he asked the House to think of the enormous change in public opinion that had taken place respecting these matters in the last forty years. They did not want to be governed by the Act of 1852, and if there was not time now in which to amend and alter that Act it was right in the interests of Charity and the persons concerned that the matter should be postponed until they could deal with it on principles very different from those on which the Charity Commissioners had acted hitherto. The observations of the Vice President of the Council had been conciliatory and he made no complaint against the right hon. Member or the Department over which he presided. He understood from the right hon. Member that the Government would agree to an amendment which would remove £14,000 of this Charity from the operation of the present scheme, the sum so removed being allowed to accumulate with interest until such a time as the matter could be dealt with in greater accordance with modern principles. That in itself was quite satisfactory, but there were other parts of the scheme which were open to the gravest objection. These parts of the scheme would take the management of the charity from the hands of those in whose hands it ought rightly to remain, and there were other proposals which, he believed, would in the course of time have the effect of changing the schools which were nominally for the benefit of the agricultural class into schools which would be used by a superior class of persons. These points ought to be carefully considered by the House, and as they had not the opportunity of considering them adequately now, and as a very important part of the scheme was to be withdrawn already, with the consent of the Government, he held that the wisest course to take would be to withdraw the whole scheme. There was another point to which he attached great importance. He wanted the whole of this scheme to be withdrawn in order, once for all, to teach a lesson to the Charity Commissioners. Since he had been in Parliament—now for 18 years—he had protested against the conduct of the Charity Commissioners. Again and again they had deliberately endeavoured by every means in their power—and he thought sometimes that they had taken advantage of circumstances they ought not, to set aside public opinion and popular feeling in these matters to obtain moneys left for the benefit of the poor and to use them for other purposes. He did not object to their taking possession of those charities in order to further the cause with which they were connected; he did not criticise the application of those funds, provided they were maintained for the same class for which they were intended; but it was a monstrous thing to find that hundreds of thousands of pounds were being taken from the charities of the poor and devoted to what was practically the education of the upper classes. It was perfectly monstrous that the House should allow this kind of thing to go on. The Charity Commissioners were indefatigable. They had received a rebuff time after time. In the time of the late Government they brought forward one scheme under which they proposed to take a large scheme amounting to many thousands of pounds—it was the Dauntsey Charity—and to deal with it in a similar fashion. The Conservative Government defeated their proposals and secured the rejection of the scheme in the House of Lords. He sometimes thought that this was a point in favour of that ancient institution; but now surely the supporters of a Liberal Government were not going to allow their Government to be less liberal in a matter of this kind than the Conservative Government. He appealed to the Vice President of the Council to allow the House on this occasion by its vote to make a protest against the action of the Charity Commissioners; and on that account he earnestly hoped that if the House divided it would divide against the whole Scheme.

Mr. H. H. COZENS-HARDY (Norfolk, N.) moved an Amendment to the Motion excluding all that part of the Scheme which related to the Herefordshire Educational Endowment. The effect of the Amendment would be to provide that no portion of these Charity funds would be removed from the three parishes in question, and to hinder any part of the Charity from being applied to a different class of the community from that which was originally intended.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. T. REID, Dumfries, &c.) said, there could be no surprise that the Amendment had been moved, as indeed it was moved at the wish of and in concert with the Vice President. The whole point for the House, was whether the Amendment was a fair solution of the difficulties in and the objections to the Scheme. The main complaint of the hon. Member for North Hereford, was that sums of money were being taken away from the three parishes and were being diverted to county as opposed to parochial purposes. It was therefore proposed that that part of the Scheme should be withdrawn and held over for further consideration. That seemed to be a reasonable offer, which ought to close the discussion.

*SIR M. HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.) said, he hoped his hon. Friend would not accept the offer. Nobody had defended the Scheme except one hon. Member, who was prejudiced in its favour to start with. The result of the Amendment would be that £14,000, would be held in suspense for an indefinite period. Surely it was much more sensible that the whole Scheme should be sent back to the Commissioners for further consideration.

*MR. ACLAND said he did not think the Charity Commissioners laid so much store as he did on such part of the Scheme as would be left if the part dealing with county scholarships were struck out, and certainly he would not press against the feeling of the House.

Amendment withdrawn, and Motion agreed to.

ROYAL PATRIOTIC FUND.

Ordered :—

"That a Select Committee be appointed to enquire into and report on the administration and financial position of the several funds controlled by the Commissioners of the Royal Patriotic Fund, and of such other funds as may be administered by other bodies or persons for the relief of widows, orphans, and dependent relatives of soldiers, sailors, and marines."—(*Mr. Kearley.*)"

PUBLIC PETITIONS.

Ordered :—

"That a Select Committee be appointed, to whom shall be referred all Petitions presented to the House, with the exception of such as relate to Private Bills; and that such Committee do classify and prepare abstracts of the same, in such form and manner as shall appear to them best suited to convey to the House all requisite information respecting their contents, and do report the same from time to time to the House; and that the reports of the Committee do set forth the number of signatures to each Petition only in respect of those signatures to which addresses are affixed:—And that such Committee have power to direct the printing *in extenso* of such Petitions, or of such parts of Petitions, as shall appear to require it: And that such Committee have power to report their opinion and observations thereupon to the House.

The Committee accordingly nominated—Mr. Benn, Mr. Biddulph, Colonel Bridgeman, Mr. Byles, Colonel Cotton-Jodrell, Mr. Crombie, Sir Charles Dalrymple, Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Leake, Mr. Herbert Lewis, Mr. Mulholland, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, Mr. Tollemache, and Mr. Henry J. Wilson.

Ordered :—That Three be the quorum.—(*Sir Charles Dalrymple.*)

House adjourned at One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Friday, 22nd February 1895.

THE UNEMPLOYED QUESTION.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: My Lords, I have been asked to present a Petition from the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of the County Borough of West Ham. I need not wait for a larger House because it is not a matter which concerns your Lordships, but it relates to an Inquiry which is proceeding in the other House. The burden of the Petition is that the Corporation complain that they are called upon by the Local Government Board to provide relief works for the unemployed. They say that the duty cast upon them by the Local Government Board is not one which they have any facilities or means of properly performing, and that a duty of so extensive a character ought to be undertaken by the State:—

> "Your Petitioners are, therefore, of opinion that the time has now arrived when Parliament should deal with the matter, and that the duty of finding employment for persons out of work should be undertaken by the State, which alone possesses the means of dealing with a matter of such vast magnitude."

House adjourned at Thirty minutes past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 22nd February 1895.

The House met at Three of the Clock.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

LAMBETH WATER (TRANSFER) BILL.

MR. J. STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton) moved: "That this Bill be read a second time."

The hon. Member said the Bill provided for the purchase of the undertaking of the Lambeth Waterworks Company by agreement or, failing that, by arbitration, the arbitrator to take into consideration all the circumstances of the case. He would not stop to argue that it was necessary or desirable that a community should possess the control of its own water supply; the time was now passed when such a point needed to be argued. The opinions that had been expressed by the right hon. Member for West Birmingham and others, rendered it unnecessary to say anything in support of the general proposition. The London County Council had been practically obliged to bring in this Bill, and the other eight water Bills they had introduced in consequence of the opinions expressed by important Committees of this House. The growth of the views of these Committees was remarkable, and they had advanced steadily in one direction. The Duke of Richmond's Commission, in 1869, reported that the future control of the water supply of the Metropolis should be entrusted to a responsible public body, with powers conferred on them for the purchase or the extension of the existing works. In 1880 there was a Select Committee, presided over by the present Chancellor of the Exchequer; that went a step further than the Commission, and reported that it was expedient that the supply of water to the Metropolis should be placed under the control of some public body which should represent the interests and command the confidence of the water consumers. In 1891 there was another Committee, presided over by a gentleman whose position on the Committees of the House was of undisputed pre-eminence, the hon. Member for Blackpool (Sir M. White Ridley); and that Committee reported that the London County Council was the body to whom the duty named should be entrusted. They recommended that the London County Council, as the responsible municipal authority of London, should have power to inquire into the whole position of the metropolitan water supply and to come to a conclusion as to the policy which, for financial and other reasons, it was desirable to adopt, and, if it were so resolved, that they should have power to promote a Bill or Bills for the purpose of constituting themselves the responsible water authority,

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

and further that the London County Council, if it were the constituted water authority, should be required to purchase, either alone or in conjunction with such authorities in outside areas as might enter into arrangements with them, the undertakings of the eight water companies by agreement, or, failing agreement, by arbitration within a fixed period. It was to be observed that this report was made after the consideration of a suggested water trust, one of the alternatives which had been much pressed upon the public; and the proposal of a water trust was condemned by that important Committee. Further it was stated in the Report that in doing this the London County Council should take over the duties and obligations of the outside authorities to the consumers of water, and then it proceeded to lay down the conditions of dealing with the outside authorities of the counties round about London embodied in the present Bill. In the 1888 Committee, three alternatives were proposed, the alternative of strict regulation of the water companies, of an independent supply and purchase of such of the companies as could be got on fair and reasonable terms. Many papers and documents dealing with the Bill had been circulated in the House. The objection to these Bills seemed to lie in two directions. Firstly, it was said the County Council were about to ruin the debenture-holders; and secondly, that they proposed to confiscate the property of the shareholders. With regard to the debenture-holders, the Bill proposed that their security upon the undertaking should remain. It was said that the water companies had a property worth many millions, yielding a net income divisible at present of a million a year, and that the County Council representing a great and wealthy community would play such ducks and drakes with the property that it would not be able to meet even the £100,000 a year interest on the debentures. He really thought that went beyond the limit of reasonable argument. The County Council would have to reckon with the ratepayers of London long before anything like that came about. As to confiscating the property of the shareholders it was stated in the Press, and in the documents he had referred to, that the County Council were about to propose an arbitration in which every point that went against the companies would be taken account of, and nothing which was to their advantage would go before the arbitrator. That was an utter misrepresentation of the facts. The Bill provided that the arbitrator should consider what, having regard to all the circumstances of the case, was a fair and reasonable price. He wished now to put before the House the origin of the various proposals to be submitted to the arbitrator. They had not emanated from the brain of the London County Council. With one exception, they were all subjects regarded as necessary for consideration in connection with the purchase of the companies by the Committee of the House itself and the Royal Commission which had recently sat. There was the state of the filtration works of the various companies, and the Committee of 1891 said that, should it be impossible to carry out a purchase, it would be necessary to consider what further obligations and further control should be put on these companies, and the County Council were prepared to consider these specific points at the arbitration. The competing powers of the various companies would be taken into account in assessing their value. Lord Eldon, one of the highest authorities on the subject, speaking in the House of Lords, once said—

> "If the object of the Legislature in passing the different Bills for the supply of water in the Metropolis—which may not be supposed to have been that of competition—have been defeated by the different companies joining together to establish a monopoly, I hope your Lordships will not separate without its being distinctly understood that it is perfectly within the competence of Parliament to set that right."

One of the documents relating to the Bill which had been circulated in the House, said that—

> "instead of settling the question of water supply, it appears that the County Council contemplate asking Parliament in another Session to sanction an entirely new and costly scheme."

The companies themselves admitted that large additional works were necessary for the supply of London, and, therefore, by purchasing the works of the present companies, they could not finally settle the London water question. The additional supply of water required, and the bearing of the matter upon the position of the companies was one of the chief subjects the Parliamentary Committee would have to consider. The great point was, where should they obtain the additional supply, and who should bring it to London? But the purchase of the companies on fair and reasonable terms was an essential preliminary to any proper solution of the question of additional water supply. It was said that they were going to destroy the value of these companies. The arbitration would necessarily be a long and difficult subject, but from the day when it was determined that any company should sell, and that the County Council should buy, the latter would become responsible, and, as the proprietors of the company, would be bound to pay and to continue to pay half-yearly to the shareholders their present dividends. They would take over all the obligations of the company. If the London County Council or any other public representative body were capable after acquiring such undertakings of destroying their value, they would be condemnable in the extreme, and unworthy of being treated with by the House. If this Bill passed its second reading they should go on with the Southwark and Vauxhall Water Bill, because these two Bills stood very much in the same category. They were not making a grab at the most valuable property; on the contrary, they were endeavouring to purchase on fair and reasonable terms the two companies which it was most in the public interest should be purchased. These two companies taken together made the lowest dividend of any of the companies. They were in the worst condition as to their sources of supply, their filtration, and works. They would be bound, if not dealt with by a public authority, to come themselves to the House for very large and extended powers at a very early date. They were the companies about which there had been most dispute as to propriety of their charges, and they charged the highest sums to the ratepayers. Under those circumstances they felt it was their duty, as representing the public in this matter, to deal with these companies first. Many of the companies, like the Kent, East London, and New River Companies, had the larger portion of their area outside the county of London, but these two companies had a very small portion of their area of supply, or of their Parliamentary area, outside the county of London. If the House granted leave to the County Council to purchase these companies they would still be workable, and would not bring them into competition with any other companies. These were some of the reasons why these two companies should form a separate group. The different water companies differed in regard to their powers, charges, and supply, in relation to the counties in which they were situated and to the County of London, and in regard to the water consumer. There was no common body called the water companies of London; they were separate and competing bodies, and they had always been regarded as such. It was essential, therefore, that they should proceed with the consideration of the different Bills in detachments. They had introduced the whole of the eight Bills because they wished to solve the whole water question, and they hoped to be able to proceed with them at a later period of the Session. They hoped also that in some cases they might come to an agreement, and they were not prepared to carry all these Bills before the Committee for consideration at once. They must bring their case before the Committee in their own way. The procedure they proposed was the least expensive for all the parties concerned. They had been met by a proposal of the right hon. Member for the University of London that the further consideration of these measures should be deferred until the County Council which was about to be elected had had an opportunity of pronouncing an opinion. He had never ventured to claim for a moment that the House should wait, hat in hand, to know what it was to do on a great question of public interest until they had received the answer of a local body; yet this was what the hon. Member proposed. Were they going when the County Council pronounced again to listen to it or not? If they were not, why did they defer the matter? It was almost a greater victory for the County Council if the House accepted the hon. Member's proposal than if they passed the Second Reading. But by waiting a couple of months all the parties concerned would be kept in doubt whether the House was going to permit any such legislation to proceed or not, and if the House did not want this legislation, it was in the interests of the rateyayers of the County of London that they should say so. Since 1889 this question had been constantly before the County Council, and only on one occasion had there ever been a Division taken by the so-called Moderate Party against the present water proposals. It was a dream to imagine that the County Council were going to reverse their policy on the water question, because the Progressive and the Moderate Parties alike had never been so unanimous on any matter as upon the policy represented by the Bills in question. The Council wanted the Second Reading now, and, if it was accorded by the House, there was nothing to prevent the present Council or the future Council withdrawing the Bills if afterwards they did not approve of them. But he maintained that a great necessity like this, affecting the health of the largest community in the world, should not be left in the hands of private companies, whose main consideration was, of course, the interests of the shareholders. It was a matter which every municipal reformer interested in the better sanitary condition of our large centres of population must regard as of paramount importance, and in these circumstances he asked the House not to postpone decision upon it, but to pass the Bill he now moved.

*Sir **JOHN LUBBOCK** (London University) proposed as an Amendment—

> "That the further consideration of all Bills for the acquisition of the property of the London Water Companies be postponed until the County Council shortly to be elected shall have had an opportunity of pronouncing upon the subject."

The right hon. Baronet said, considering this was a matter involving an expenditure of £30,000,000, and that a new County Council was to be elected next week, he thought the hon. Member for Shoreditch would have seen the reasonableness of postponing the question for a few days at least. The true spirit of democracy might have suggested that this opportunity of ascertaining the opinion of the people of London on the question should be taken before any definite course was adopted. He had reason to believe that the majority of the representatives of London would support his Amendment. He was not a shareholder of the water companies, and was acting solely in what he believed to be the interests of the ratepayers. They had been told that the present County Council represented an overwhelming majority of the citizens of the Metropolis, but that was not the fact. The Progressive majority at the last election for the whole of London was 30,000 out of 560,000 voters. Moreover, there were six seats not contested by the Progressives, and, if they allowed the Moderate majority of 2,500 in each, it would reduce the Progressive majority on the whole to 15,000 only. That could hardly be called an overwhelming majority. He contended that the present was a most unsatisfactory time to purchase; and that it would necessarily involve a serious addition to the rates of the Metropolis. The arbitrators who settled the price of purchase would have to look to the profits the company were making. What did the County Council tell them on that point? The Lambeth Company had a Bill before the House which the County Council were opposing, and in their petition the Council stated that—

> "The dividends paid would be found not to be justified if the accounts of the Lambeth Company were properly investigated and proper allowance made in respect of depreciation of capital and superseded works, and that any such profits must undergo considerable reductions in consequence of the additional expenditure and liabilities in which, according to the report of the Royal Commission and the opinion of your petitioners, the Lambeth Company must be involved in the future."

With those facts before them, was it right or judicious to enter into the question of purchase? But even supposing that purchase could be effected at a fair price, and that the Council could carry out the work economically—which he very much doubted—there was the consideration of the addition to the rates which purchase must involve. The County Council were already overwhelmed with work, and he questioned the wisdom of their undertaking in addition the enormous responsibility of the management of the water supply of the Metropolis. But, putting that point aside, the House was aware that the County Council were under an obligation to pay off their loans in 60 years. The Water Companies were under no such obligation. If the Council bought the Companies, the present ratepayers would not only have to pay for the water, but for the redemption of stock, and this payment of £30,000,000 in 60 years would mean an addition to the water rate of 4d. in the pound. Moreover, an additional water supply, which the County Council believed was absolutely necessary, from a distance might involve an increased expenditure of 20 or 30 millions. Under present circumstances that expense, if necessary and undertaken, would fall on the Companies, but if the Bills of the Council passed it would fall on the ratepayers, involving at least another increase in the rate of 4d. in the pound, and he urged that this was a further strong reason for postponing purchase. He was curious to know how the ratepayers of the Metropolis would vote next week if they fully realised the facts of the case. His hon. Friend seemed to imagine that in introducing this Bill he was acting in accordance with the recommendations of the Committee which sat in 1880. But that Committee, over which the present Chancellor of the Exchequer presided, did not recommend a Bill of this kind. In its Report it said—

> "Without absolutely prescribing the composition of such a body, your Committee are of opinion that it should include elements to be derived from the Corporation of London and the Metropolitan Board of Works, together with a due representation of the districts at present supplied by the Metropolitan Water Companies."

But that was not what the Bill did. Perhaps it might be said that the London County Council was not in existence when the Committee sat. But the areas of the Water Companies extended beyond the boundaries of London, and clearly the intention of the Committee was that the water supply should be in the hands of some body which was coterminous with the districts to be supplied with water. He resided in Kent, and he felt satisfied that the people of that county would very much object to the water supply of their district being in the hands of the London County Council. His hon. Friend stated that there could be no doubt that the tendency of public opinion was in favour of these Bills. He disputed this statement. What had happened on the point? When the Bill of the London County Council was before the House in 1891, Lord Farrer gave evidence in its favour, and, when his (Sir John Lubbock's) opinion was quoted that "such undertakings are, as a rule, more economically managed as private enterprises than by public bodies," the noble Lord declared that "Sir John Lubbock was in a minority of one on the question." Since then that little party had been increased by the addition of the noble Lord himself, for in his evidence before the Labour Commission two years afterwards he said—

> "The action of the London County Council on the Labour question had caused many to doubt the wisdom of transferring to it public undertakings, and it considerably damped his own ardour with regard to the water supply, so that he was almost inclined to think with Sir John Lubbock that the water should remain in the hands of the Companies."

An opinion of that kind, coming from so high an authority, must have great weight with the House. Mr. Burdett, in his great standard work on "Stock and Share Companies," referring to Lord Farrer's evidence, says—

> "This evidence indicates a change in public opinion, which now seems to be settling down to the support of the policy of leaving the water supply in the hands of existing companies."

He knew he was not bound, in opposing the Bill, to suggest an alternative policy, but he had given the subject the most careful and anxious consideration for nearly a quarter of a century, and he would endeavour to indicate the policy that, in his opinion, ought to be pursued. The Water Companies, with, perhaps, one exception, were limited to a dividend of 10 per cent., and they were bound to apply any additional profit in reducing the price of the water. At present four of the Companies were able to pay the maximum dividend, one was paying 9½ per cent., one 8½ per cent., one 8 per cent., and one 6 per cent. Thus in the case of seven of the Companies practically any increase in their profits must go in the reduction of the price of water, while, if there should be a loss, it would fall upon the shareholders. The hon. Member asked them to surrender that position and to enter into this gigantic speculation. If the undertaking improved, the ratepayers would gain no more than under present conditions; but, on the other hand, if it went badly, they would be involved in the loss. They must, no doubt, take into consideration that the Companies were entitled to make up their back dividends to 10 per cent. The Chancellor of the Exchequer's Committee suggested that that right should, as in the case of the Gas Companies, be limited to six years, and he thought that suggestion was a very reasonable one. He would suggest that two or three directors should be placed on each Board to protect the public interest—one from the Board of Trade, one from the London County Council, and, in the case of those Companies that supplied the outside districts, one from the County Council of those districts. He submitted that under that proposal the ratepayers would obtain all the benefit of the water supply, while any loss would fall on the Companies. That arrangement, he thought, would be satisfactory, not only to the ratepayers, but to the Companies themselves. It would save the present endless expense of litigation to which they were put, and it would give them a security for their dividend which would be an ample recompense for any sacrifice of possible future profit. With regard to the manner in which the Companies were treated under the Bill, he said he was sure the County Council had no intention of doing any injustice to the holders of debentures. But what the House had to consider was, not the intentions, but the proposal of the County Council, and that proposal was that these debenture-holders should be bought out at the price of the stock last March. They knew, however, that since last March securities of this kind had gone up, for reasons quite apart from the introduction of these Bills. The House, he thought, would never agree to the Second Reading of a clause which would be so unjust to the holders of these Debenture Stocks. In these remarks, however, he was not making any attack on the London County Council, who did not, he felt sure, intend any injustice; but the House could not deal with intentions, they had to look to practical matters as they were brought before them.

Mr. STUART said he was sorry to interrupt the right hon. Baronet, but surely these were questions for consideration in Committee.

*__Sir J. LUBBOCK__: That was a point for the House to determine; and he protested against the suggestion to refer a question of great principle of this kind to Committee. It seemed unreasonable to press on a question of such magnitude at the present moment, and he would give a precedent for that course not being followed. When the London County Council was formed six years ago, the Metropolitan Board of Works was terminated some three weeks or a month before the appointed time. Why was that done? Because they were going to commit London to the Blackwall Tunnel Scheme, involving an expenditure of something like half a million. On that occasion Lord Rosebery called a special meeting of the London County Council, and at that meeting said—

> "he felt that a contract of this sort, involving a vast expenditure, which must be defrayed by the London County Council, was one which ought not to be entered into by a body which was about to expire within three weeks."

He said he spoke "with a solemn sense of responsibility," and proposed that the existence of the Metropolitan Board of Works should be at once terminated, a view in which the Council and the Government concurred. As Vice Chairman of the Council he seconded that resolution, and therefore he was only consistent in proposing the Amendment now standing in his name. The present case was even stronger. In the first place, the Metropolitan Board of Works had three weeks more to act, and their scheme involved an expenditure of £500,000, whereas the term of the present County Council expired next week, and their scheme involved an expenditure of nearly £30,000,000. Surely, in these circumstances, the consideration of this great question, so deeply affecting the welfare of the people of London, ought to be postponed until the new County Council had had an opportunity of considering it in all its bearings. He concluded by moving the Amendment.

*__The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD__ (Mr. G. J. SHAW-LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central) thought it would be convenient to the House if he took an early opportunity of stating the views of the Government on the question. He had listened with surprise to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman who had just spoken, as the whole of it was an argument against the policy of the purchase. The right hon. Gentleman questioned the policy of purchase from an economic point of view, and in that differed from every authority of importance. The Amendment was not in direct opposition to the Bill, but was one for postponement, and he wished to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, in the event of the House agreeing to the postponement of the Bill until after the County Council election—and as the ratepayers approved of the policy of the Council they knew what the result of the election would be—he would support the proposals now before the House.

*SIR JOHN LUBBOCK wished to point out that, if London decided at the next election in favour of the Bill, it would be perfectly useless for him to oppose it further.

*MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE asked whether he was to understand that, in the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman, the House was to take the verdict of London. [An hon. MEMBER: "Why not?"] He was glad to hear that, knowing as he did what the result of the election would be. His right hon. Friend had a plan of his own in dealing with this subject, but he rather distrusted men who had plans of their own. That plan proposed an amalgamated water company with a representative of London upon the board.

*SIR J. LUBBOCK said he had never said so. There would be no amalgamation, because if the companies were amalgamated, arrangements would have to be made as to the different classes of stock, which would be very difficult and expensive.

*MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE said, the right hon. Gentleman had stated that there would be representation of London on the companies, and, as he understood, one company would be so formed as to be, in the opinion of his right hon. Friend, competent to effect whatever improvements were necessary in the direction of giving fresh water supplies to the Metropolis. And he also gave the impression that it would be undesirable and inexpedient to procure additional supplies from the river Thames. If the water companies were compelled to expend capital out of their existing resources, and in reduction of their present profits and dividends, for the purpose of providing the future supply of London from a distance, it would be a serious burden upon them, and he should not be surprised if the conclusion to which the companies would come was that they had better embrace the present opportunity of purchase. The right hon. Gentleman had quoted Lord Farrer as being almost inclined to leave the supply in the hands of the companies, but he was hardly justified in quoting Lord Farrer. His opinion, no doubt, was a competent one; still, the right hon. Gentleman was not justified in quoting him.

*SIR J. LUBBOCK: I quote his evidence given before the Commission.

*MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE: I am not speaking without knowledge of the matter. All that Lord Farrer had to say was, that he was almost inclined to think that it would be better to leave the supply in the hands of the companies. At any rate, the right hon. Gentleman had not the support of any large body of the members of the London County Council, the majority of whom had approved the principle of purchase. He believed also that the new Council would not be unwilling to adopt the scheme. The County Council had only followed the example of other great corporations, and they had all proceeded in the same direction—to take over the control of the water supply, obtained through some river passing through the district, from private companies. It had been found necessary then to obtain fresh supplies, and with the view to obtaining that it was always necessary for the corporation to step in. There were cases without end in which corporations had come before the House with schemes of this nature, and they had all been sanctioned by that House on the Second Reading, and approved finally by Select Committees. The House need not be frightened by the great amount involved. There was the case of Birmingham, where the Corporation was ultimately involved in from £6,000,000 to £8,000,000 in perfecting their schemes. They were told the other night by the Member for West Birmingham that London was ten times larger than Birmingham; and if Birmingham spent £6,000,000, why should not London undertake to spend a considerable sum of money? He hoped it would not be required to spend money in the same proportion. It was said, as to repayment of capital, that an increase of 4d. in the £1 would be necessary; but if that were a correct estimate it must apply to every other corporation in the country. There was no instance yet of a corporation being deterred from purchase by fears of that kind. He could not but hope that, by good management by the Council, it would be found that there would be no serious increase of charge. He pointed out that there had been a constant consensus of authority in favour of the transfer of the supply of water to local authorities. They began with the Duke of Richmond's Commission in 1866. Then in 1880 there was the Committee of his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Nothing could be stronger than the conclusions of that Committee in favour of the transfer of the water supply to the local authorities. His right hon. Friend seemed to think that the Committee recommended some form of trust; he forgot, however, that the County Council was not then in existence, but the recommendations of the Committee clearly showed that the formation of such a body was in their mind, for these words were used:—

> "In the absence of any single municipal body, a water authority of a representative character should be constituted."

*Sir J. LUBBOCK said he quoted those words.

*Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE said, apparently his right hon. Friend did not see the force of them. A central authority had been created, and they might now transfer to it the control of the water supply. Then followed other Committees and other Reports. There was a Committee presided over by the Member for Northumberland, and it reported that the County Council should have the power to promote a Bill with the object of taking over the water companies. He did not propose at this stage to enter into the details of the scheme. Many of the proposals were open to consideration and would receive consideration by the Committee. The proposals in the Bill, however, were not nearly so arbitrary as those in the Birmingham Bill, and the House allowed that arbitrary Bill to pass, on the ground that all the objections should be considered by the Select Committee. He ventured to say that these were not objections which should be taken to the Bill on a Second Reading. In his opinion, the proposal of the County Council was a wise one in the interests of London. He believed that there was nothing in which the people of London were more interested than in obtaining a supply of water. The object of the Amendment was, that the opponents of the County Council might vote against the scheme without showing their hand, and he was confirmed in that by a statement in *The Times* that morning to the effect that—

> "although ten London Conservative Members would vote for Sir John Lubbock's Amendment on the Second Reading, they were not prepared to support a Motion for the rejection of the measure."

They wanted to postpone the Bill and delay it. The effect of postponing the Second Reading would be the waste of another year. In a matter of this great importance it was essential that they should send the Bill to a Select Committee which, at best, could hardly get to work before Easter. If, at the coming election, the policy of the London County Council should be reversed, it would still be open to the new Council to withdraw the Bill at any moment. He had, however, the utmost confidence that the people of London would confirm the policy of the Council, and insist that the control of the water supply must pass into the hands of the County Council.

Mr. E. BOULNOIS (Marylebone, E.) said, they had been told that the County Council was unanimous for acquiring the water supply of London, but it would not be denied that there was a fair minority in the Council which was opposed to the principle, at all events. He thought these Bills should not be proceeded with until they had more evidence on the financial aspect of the question. The minority did not know the real facts, and they were entitled to know them. He would urge three reasons why the Amendment of his right hon. Friend should be accepted, and they were reasons simply for delay. The first reason was that there was no information before the House upon the financial aspect of the question; the second, that there was no mandate from the electors to deal with it; and the third, that the London County Council did not know their own mind on the subject. With regard to the first point, some members of the Council had tried over and over again to ascertain what would be the effect of this policy on the rates, but all in vain. Even now, it would be observed, if hon. Members looked at the Bill, there was no disclosure as to how the money was to be raised. The outlay had been variously estimated at from £30,000,000 to £50,000,000. Reports received from the engineer to the County Council were not disclosed to the Council, and therefore not to the public, but it was quite clear that the sum involved would be gigantic. That being so, the House should have some indication of what liability the ratepayers were likely to be involved in by the schemes of the County Council before they were asked to assent to the Bill. As to his second point, that there was no mandate from the electors, he had a strong opinion that when the ratepayers knew what the schemes were likely to cost they would hesitate before they pronounced in favour of them. Mr. Arthur Arnold had admitted in the County Council that "they had not made any adequate calculation" as to the cost, and it was generally believed that no calculation whatever had been made by the Council in this matter. The London County Council did not know their own mind. They had presented Bills for the acquisition of the undertakings of the Water Companies, and they knew that tens of thousands would probably be spent upstairs in fighting over those Bills. At the same time they had passed a Resolution which declared that the supplies from the Thames and the Lea were contaminated water and not fit for potable purposes, and the true solution of the problem was to obtain additional supplies from purer sources, and they accordingly instructed their engineer to proceed with the preparation of a scheme. So that next Session the House would see a Bill brought in for this new scheme, and then there would be more lavish expenditure of money on witnesses, on expert evidence, on inquiries. The expenditure on this alone would probably not be less than £1,000,000 sterling. He thought it highly probable that the new County Council, notwithstanding what the President of the Local Government Board had predicted, might think that the introduction of eight Bills was inexpedient. It certainly was an extremely costly proposal, and they might think it more expedient to bring in one Bill, and one would have thought that would have been really the better course. It was also probable that the new Council might desire to enter into negotiations with the Joint Authorities of Middlesex, Hertford, Kent, Surrey, and Essex, and avoid their opposition, which would be only reasonable. He was, indeed, surprised that the London County Council had not got on their side these Authorities before coming to this House. At all events the new Council might think it desirable to carry out the recommendation of the Committee of 1891, that the Council should endeavour to purchase the undertakings in conjunction with the Authorities of the outside areas. The object of the County Council had now been openly avowed. They did not intend to acquire the whole of the undertakings. Their determination was to acquire the Lambeth undertaking in the first instance, and the hon. Member in charge of the Bill stated that the principle which induced them to do so was that that Company supplied an area which was almost entirely inside London and very little outside. Now, what were the facts? The area in the County of London supplied by that Company was 25 square miles, and the area outside 46 square miles; the reservoirs in London covered 17 acres, and outside 75 acres. The new Council might think it advisable to deal with the question as a whole, and not to tinker with it piecemeal, as the present Council was doing. Other Corporations which had adopted this policy had, at all events, bought the undertakings in their respective districts honestly and fairly. The London County Council were not doing that, but were approaching the water companies in a very different spirit. It would be said with some truth that the London County Council, in its expiring moments, with only a few hours' breath left in its body, was endeavouring to force upon Londoners a gigantic scheme, involving them in enormous expenditure, whilst after the speech of the President of the Local Government Board it would also be said that an expiring Government were aiding and abetting the London County Council in forcing these claims upon what might turn out to be an unwilling electorate.

*Mr. H. L. W. LAWSON (Gloucester, Cirencester) desired to intervene in this Debate as a member of the Committee which sat in 1891 to consider the Water Trust and Water Commission Bills. That was a hybrid Committee, the members of the Party opposite were in a majority, and yet that Committee was absolutely unanimous in deciding that the water authority of London ought to be the London County Council. More than that, they had submitted to them statements to show the successful working of municipal enterprise in water supply from many urban centres and great cities. There was no evidence on the other side, and he recollected the Member for Blackpool saying that the Committee would take as their starting-point the report of the Committee of 1880, presided over by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and not consider whether municipal ownership of the water supply was a good thing or not, but take it as granted by the reference from the House. Therefore it was not, as the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down contended, a party question; for his own party on that Committee agreed to assume it, and that put it for ever outside the range of party controversy. The Amendment before the House was not for the rejection of the Bill, but to postpone it until after the re-election of the London County Council. He submitted to the House that, although Members of all sides might be rushing about the metropolis from hall to hall speaking for one candidate or another, it was beneath the dignity of the House of Commons to postpone its decision until after the re-election of a local body. Suppose this were the case of the Corporation of Liverpool, or the County Council of Lancashire, would the House be asked to postpone its decision on Bills introduced by these bodies until the re-election of their members? Such a thing was without parallel or precedent. The right hon. Gentleman the member for the University of London spoke of the Board of Works as a parallel case. But that was the extinction of a governing body which had been weighed and found wanting. It could not be compared with the re-election of a body like the London County Council, which carried on the traditions of government and did not lose its corporate existence. It would be very inconvenient for the members of the newly-elected Council to find their hands were tied, and they were unable to proceed with these bills if they decided they were worthy of support. They had to deal not only with the Standing Orders of the House of Commons but of the House of Lords. The hon. Gentleman who last spoke said it was an unprecedented thing for the London County Council to try and buy up the Companies one by one. He had authority for saying they intended to purchase all the existing water companies, but they hoped that by dealing with one or two of them, they would be able to purchase the others by agreement instead of by arbitration, and thus save expense. The Committee would settle the principles, and the arbitrators would work out the figures of purchase. As to the possible economy that might be effected, he did not know that they were called upon to discuss it, but he believed in the unification of the water supply. The concentration of management and machinery would be in itself a saving which would compensate for the extra expense in other ways. But the people of London had had it demonstrated to them during the last week or two that this was not only a matter of pocket, but of health and convenience. The decent comfort of the home depended on water administration. He thought the House would be taking a strong and unprecedented course if they accepted the motion of the Member for the London University, considering that the London County Council was not only following the uniform practice of this House, but the uniform advice given by every Royal Commission and Select Committee that had ever inquired into the subject.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): This subject is one in which I have taken a great deal of interest, and, although not a member of the London County Council, I should like to say a few words based upon my own experience. I cannot altogether on this occasion sympathise with my right hon. Friend who sits beside me. Whatever may be the intention of his Amendment, I think his argument goes further than the Amendment, and does go the length of negativing the idea of the purchasing of the water supply by a public authority. That raises an issue we have first to dispose of. If my right hon. Friend is right in his very interesting speech and in the very weighty arguments he has brought before the House, not only ought we to reject this Bill, but we ought to dismiss, at all events for the present, any idea whatever of any local authority ever becoming the owner of the water supply of London. As I say, I cannot go so far with my right hon. Friend. I do not agree with his view, which, I think, is really rather a novel view, at all events, during recent years, because in all our discussions, both of this London question and also of the question of a similar supply in the provinces, there has been an almost universal consensus of opinion that wherever possible it is desirable that the local authority should become the owner on fair and reasonable terms. That I believe to be the recommendation of various Committees, not speaking of London alone, but of sanitary and other Committees, that in the public interest, every assistance ought to be given by this House to local authorities, to become the owners of their own water supplies. In regard to London, I think the case is very strong indeed. In the first place it is not, after all, in the public interest than an enterprise which is of necessity in the nature of a monopoly, should remain in private hands. We may give every credit to the public spirit of the directors of a private company; but still it is true, after all, that their first duty is to their shareholders, and that the interest and convenience of the public, are likely to suffer if they are at any time antagonistic to the interests of the shareholders. My right hon. Friend has brought forward a new argument in this respect, because he says that, as the companies are confined to a maximum dividend, the ratepayers of London, have the advantage of not suffering loss. If there is a loss they are not obliged to pay more. But the universal experience of provincial corporations, has proved that when a company has secured its maximum dividend, the object for economy has gone. There is no longer any pressing stimulus to effect economy and make further profits which would lead to any considerable reduction in the price of the water or any considerable advantage. I hold that it is most inconvenient, to say the least of it, that a local authority should not have the control of its own streets. When private companies have the power of breaking up streets which are under the control of the local authority there is sure to be a clashing of interests and friction which very often produces very bad results. Then, Sir, I cannot doubt, and this applies especially to the case of London, that there is an opportunity here, without injustice to anybody, of making a very considerable saving. I do not think that any man of business will contend that, if the management of the water supply, after its transfer to the local authority, is wise and prudent, there will not then be an opportunity in the unification and consolidation of all these undertakings, for a very large saving. It cannot be to the interests of economy that there should be eight companies doing the same thing, with eight separate boards of directors and eight separate staffs and all the paraphernalia of eight separate companies. But, Sir, it follows from that if there is, as I believe there is, this great opportunity for the County Council to make an arrangement which would be to the advantage of the ratepayers, that also there is no necessity for them to behave in an illiberal, ungenerous, or unjust manner towards the shareholders in these companies. And, Sir, after all, I venture to say to the House, here is the crux of the whole question. My hon. Friend opposite who spoke last but one, and who is able to speak in some sense for the companies, said incidentally in the course of his speech that, if the companies could get fair terms—the Birmingham terms—there would be no objection on their part to the purchase of their undertakings. An hon. Gentleman below me laughs at that. Birmingham has been held up in this Debate and in previous Debates as having acted wisely in reference to the purchase of the water supply; and I venture to say here that that purchase has been, in the case of Birmingham, satisfactory to the shareholders of the water companies and also perfectly satisfactory to the ratepayers themselves. Why, if you are going to follow the example of Birmingham, should you not accept Birmingham's terms? It may be that there are special conditions in the case of London which render it impossible to accept *ipsissimis verbis* the Birmingham agreement. Very well, why on earth will you not accept fair and open arbitration? Now, Sir, I hold very strongly—and have urged it again and again to the House on private Bills—that we should not undertake to refuse a Second Reading of a private Bill except on some great question of principle. If it is merely a question of detail, I think the great majority of the House has always been prepared to admit that the House is not a competent tribunal to deal with such a matter, and that it could only be dealt with by a Committee upstairs. I say exactly the same with regard to this Bill, only I find there are principles of the very greatest importance, which are novel, laid down in the Bill of the County Council, and on which the House ought to pronounce an opinion if the County Council adheres to them. What is the principle? In the statement of reasons in support of the Bill I find it alleged that the water companies want to sell their property to the County Council, and, at the same time, to fix the price. I have never seen on the part of the water companies any desire or intention to do anything of the kind, but that is exactly what the County Council propose to do. The County Council in one clause of the Bill proposes that, failing agreement, the valuation of these companies should be arrived at by arbitration, and that the arbitrator should take into account all the circumstances of the case. I think that is perfectly fair, and if the County Council had stopped there, I, for one, would most heartily support their view; but they did not stop there. After having said it is to be a fair arbitration, and the arbitrator is to take into account all the circumstances of the case, they proceed to specify half-a-dozen or a dozen different items and considerations which they think are in their favour and which the arbitrator is specially to take into account. Let any man of business who has ever been engaged in arbitration consider what the effect of that is. The special attention of the arbitrator is called to a number of circumstances connected with the sale of the undertaking, and, on the other hand, no reference is made to any single circumstance which might be held by the arbitrator or the companies to be in favour of the companies. Anything more one-sided, more absolutely or evidently unfair than a condition of that kind it is impossible for me to conceive. I do not know who is responsible for putting that clause in the Bill. Nothing could be fairer than the statement of my hon. Friend in introducing the Bill. What he said was, that they wanted to buy, not one company, but the whole of the companies, and to buy them at a fair valuation. If the Bill had only carried out that statement I can hardly believe there would have been any necessity for even proposing to refuse it access to a Committee. I want to ask those who in this House are entitled to represent the County Council on what they intend to stand. Do they intend to stand by the declaration of the hon. Member who so ably introduced the Bill, or will they be satisfied with a fair and open arbitration, in which the arbitrator shall be instructed to take into account all the circumstances of the case, or do they want to prejudge the matter in their own interest? According to the reply which the hon. Gentlemen give me, my vote will be given on this occasion. If they mean what I regard as a perfectly unfair system of arbitration, I think they are laying down a principle which the House ought not to accept. I protest against the tone of the speech of the President of the Local Government Board. He ought to speak, in a case of this kind, in the interest of the public, and in the interest of this House, if you like; but he spoke entirely in the interest of the Progressive party on the London County Council, and he tried to make electioneering capital out of the matter, which, I hold, is altogether outside party questions. It has already been pointed out by my right hon. Friend (Sir J. Lubbock), who certainly, as a Member of the London County Council, cannot be considered hostile to its general policy, that a very large majority of the County Council have been in favour of the purchase of the water supply, and I do not regard this as one of the questions which is a political question, or even a municipally political question, in considering the questions which are in dispute between the two sides of the County Council. But it is a question in which not only the water companies, but, above all, the ratepayers of London, have the greatest possible interest. Thousands and thousands of pounds have been spent both by the County Council and the water companies in litigation. What is going to be done now? Suppose the House carries the Second Reading of this Bill, there would then have to be a hotly contested fight in Committee of this House and in Committee of another House. Whatever the result of that contest is, many thousands of pounds will be unnecessarily spent in litigation. After that there will have to be an arbitration. Who is to pay these expenses? It is not the water companies, although in the first instance they have to provide the costs. So long as they are within their statutory maximum they can always get out of their rates expenses of this kind. Therefore, in the long run, the expenses both of the County Council and the water companies would fall on the unfortunate ratepayers of London. If there is reason to believe there is no real difference on the merits between the two parties—if, on the one hand, the companies are willing to go to fair and open arbitration, and if, on the other hand, the Member for Shoreditch is willing to stand by his own declaration, and to accept a fair and open arbitration, all that seems to be necessary is that some one authorised to speak for the County Council should agree to strike out the clauses in the Bill which specially confine and direct the arbitrator. In that case I cannot help thinking that almost unanimously we might proceed to the second reading of the Bill. There are two other points about which I do not know there is any controversy. The one is that debenture-holders ought to be made absolutely secure. I do not think any member of the County Council intends to injure the security of the debentures in which trustees have been allowed to invest. The other point is that it would not be fair if it were an ulterior object on the part of the County Council, which I will not believe after the speech of my hon. friend the Member for Shoreditch, to deal with one company only and use the result as a lever to depreciate the value of the properties of other companies. I see that such an idea has been suspected. I say that if that existed it would be monstrous, it would be most unjust, and I cannot believe the House would assent to it. My hon. friend has stated in the clearest possible terms it is the intention of the County Council to deal with the companies in the sense of the recommendation of the Committee of 1880 which was presided over by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and on which I had the honour to sit as a Member. The spirit of the recommendation of that Committee was to deal with the whole of the water supply of London, and to place it in the hands of one central authority. There can be no difficulty presented by that, and I imagine my hon. Friend would have no objection whatever to make it absolutely clear to the House that the Bills which are before the House and which deal with the other companies would be proceeded with, or, if one were dropped, all would be dropped altogether. These are the only three points at issue. The principal point I venture to say, is the question of arbitration, and I would be much delighted if hon. Members speaking for the County Council would give me an assurance in that respect which would enable me to feel there would be a fair and open arbitration in which the shareholders of the companies would have full justice done to them. In that case I should vote for the second reading. If that assurance is not given, I think we must consider the issue is deliberately raised that this House is asked to say whether it will permit in future a local authority to take the property of individuals, and take it at the price which the local authority itself is to fix. I say to a proposition of that kind I should certainly have to give a negative.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby): I am sure that on matters of principle there will be no difference between us. As the right hon. Gentleman has said, he and I sat on the Water Committee of 1880, and, according to a practice which is common, we collaborated and produced the report of that Committee. What was the principle of that report? It was that it was for the public interest that the water supply of London should be in the hands of the local authority. In the report we stated that the great misfortune of London was that there was no central local authority. We constituted, with the material at our disposal, a body which should act for London in respect to water supply. What we looked forward to then was that, whenever a central authority for London was created, one of its first duties should be to acquire the water supply. So far the right hon. Gentleman and I are in absolute agreement. All the great towns of England have acquired an abundant supply of pure water. Why is it that the moment it is proposed to do for the five million people of London what has been done for Birmingham, Liverpool, Glasgow, Manchester and Leeds, there should arise a vehement opposition? The right hon. Baronet (Sir J. Lubbock), who is himself a most distinguished member of the County Council, argued against such a proposition. That, however, is not the effect of his amendment on the paper. The amendment is one which I confess I have not been able to understand. What is the meaning of postponing the consideration of this matter until after the elections? Would you do that with any other municipal body? Such a proposition would be laughed out of the House at once. The right hon. Baronet seemed to assume that in the next Council the majority might be opposed to the Bill. To postpone the consideration is not the way to meet a proposal of this kind. If the Bill is read a second time, the next Council will have the opportunity of supporting the measure or otherwise, just as they please. We do not bind ourselves to the details of the Bill in giving a vote for its second reading. All we have to look at now, in my opinion, is whether the Public Authorities ought to be intrusted with powers to acquire the property of Water Companies. In the Report of the Committee of 1880 we suggested an alternative—and I have always thought it a very powerful alternative—which was a separate supply. If anyone chooses to look at the production for which the right hon. gentleman and I are jointly responsible, they will see that it was on that alternative supply we relied, so as to ensure that the people of London get fairer terms, and a proper supply of water at a fair price. There are only two courses open to us—an alternative supply or purchase. If they cannot purchase on fair terms, the alternative supply is the only other course open to the people of London. I do not see any question of principle that divides the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham from us. He spoke of the nature of the arbitration and of the security for debenture-holders. These, surely, are questions for the Committee. Under all these circumstances I for one come to the conclusion, being still of the opinion I maintained on the Committee of 1880, jointly with the right hon. Gentleman—namely, in favour of purchase, if it can be made on fair terms, and in favour of an alternative supply if purchase cannot be effected on fair terms—and, the representative body of this metropolis having came forward with a proposal in this matter, I do not see how we can possibly take any other course except to vote for the second reading.

Mr. G. J. GOSCHEN (St. George's, Hanover Square): My right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham has raised a point to which no Member of the County Council has yet replied. The right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down says it is a question for the Committee whether the arbitration is to be open or not. But as a London Representative, I wish to speak in regard to the naked question put before the House by my right hon. Friend the Member for the University of London—namely, whether this matter should be referred to the next County Council. The Chancellor of the Exchequer asks, by way of reply to that question, whether such treatment would be applied to any of the large towns in the provinces. But what is the position? Important Members of the minority in the County Council have stated, in this House, that they do not consider the present County Council has given sufficient information to enable the constituencies to judge fairly on this question. I ask, is it right, on a question of this stupendous magnitude—because I think the President of the Local Government Board will admit that this may be a question of £40,000,000 or £50,000,000—that there should be so strange a reticence on the part of the London County Council to give information? Is not that a strange proceeding on the part of the present County Council? I think my right hon. Friend is perfectly justified in believing that, when the London County Council is differently constituted, it may take a different view as to what is the fair method of dealing in a case of this kind.

SIR W. HARCOURT: And so they may, even though the Bill be read a second time.

MR. GOSCHEN: Yes, after all the expense has been incurred, and after our constituencies have been committed by a Vote of this House. But I think the speech of my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham affords us an opportunity to come to an arrangement upon this question. There stand on the Notice Paper two Instructions. One, in the name of the hon. Member for Peckham (Mr. Banbury), is as follows:—

> "After Second Reading of Southwark and Vauxhall Water (Transfer) Bill, to move:—'That it be an Instruction to the Committee that the arbitration shall be an open arbitration, and that the arbitrator shall consider impartially all points that are favourable to both sides.'"

I think that is the point on which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham wishes an assurance. Then the other Instruction, which is to be moved by the hon. Member for Chelsea (Mr. Whitmore), is:—

> "That it be an Instruction to the Committee to insert a clause providing that the said Bill shall not become law until the whole of the Bills dealing with the Purchase of the London Water Companies by the London County Council have received the Royal Assent."

If an assurance were given that these two Instructions will be acceded to by the Friends of the County Council, I am sure the matter would be settled without a Division.

MR. B. L. COHEN (Islington, E.) said, it had been urged that the London County Council ought not to be treated differently in a matter of this kind from the municipalities of Birmingham, Manchester, or of any other large provincial town. But he should like to know whether there was a practice on those municipal corporations of having reports and accounts presented to Sub-Committees of these Standing Committees, kept back from the Members, as reports and accounts were kept back on the London County Council; and not alone kept back from the Members, but returned to the officers who drew them up because, forsooth, they had not satisfied the calculations which had been expected from them! He had been a Member of the Finance Committee of the London County Council ever since that body was instituted by Parliament, with the exception of three weeks, and he was sure the House would be surprised to hear that there had not been laid before that Committee any Report of any kind as to the probable effects of this proposed gigantic acquisition of water companies on the finances of the London County Council and on the ratepayers of London. No person would dispute the advantage and necessity of an abundant supply of water, which was one of the primary necessaries of life, to the people of London; but he did not believe there was a Corporation in England, and he was quite sure there was not a business body in the world, that would approach such a project without having first inquired into its probable cost. If such reports existed they were withheld from those who were entitled to them. At a recent meeting of the London County Council, he asked the Vice Chairman, who was also Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee, whether any Report had been presented by officers of the Council as to the financial burdens that would be entailed on the Council and on the ratepayers of London by this undertaking. The reply of the Vice Chairman was, that no such inquiry had been instituted. On the next day, at a meeting of the Finance Committee, he again inquired into the matter, and was startled to find that such a Report had been presented. Perhaps, the fact had escaped the memory of the Vice Chairman, but it was a surprising fact that that Gentleman was in the chair when the Report was submitted to the Committee, and was, for some reasons he did not know, referred back by them for re-examination. Therefore, while he was not in any way opposed to the transfer of water undertakings from private Companies to public authorities, he thought the action of the London County Council was of a character so much calculated to inspire misgiving, if not distrust, that there was abundant ground for postponing the advance of these Bills until they could be considered by the new County Council. The President of the Local Government Board said that all knew that the next London County Council would be of the same constitution. That confidence of the right hon. Gentleman was not shared by those who were opposing this Amendment; because if they really had that absolute and precipitate confidence in the return of another Progressive majority it would be less rather than more reason for opposing the Amendment. If it were the intention of the London County Council to proceed on the equitable and almost rudimentary principles suggested by the right hon. Member for Birmingham, then the postponement of the Second Reading at this moment would not retard, but would promote, the ultimate passage of the Bill. Instead of costly and dilatory fighting probably in both Committee-rooms, they would speedily and readily get the just terms.

*MR. J. FLETCHER MOULTON (Hackney, S.) said, that the greater part of the hon. Member's speech seemed to be utterly unworthy of the dignity of the House. In saying this, the hon. Member would know that he meant nothing personally unpleasant to him, because they were the best friends on the London County Council. Here was a great municipality asking, as other municipalities have done, to have the charge of its own water supply; and was it worthy of the dignity of the House to have dissentient members of a particular committee grumbling as to the amount of information furnished to them, and as to the unsatisfactory reply given to a certain letter? Parliament having created a municipality in London could listen only to the voice of that municipality, and must believe that it had done its work properly. If it had not its constituents were the tribunal to judge it. It was beneath the dignity of the House to go behind the conduct of a responsible municipality. The right hon. Member for West Birmingham had put forward a question with regard to the terms of purchase. At present the question was only one of whether powers of purchase should be granted, and on arbitration terms. But the suggestion had been made that the terms provided in the Bill were unfair and inequitable to such an extent as to constitute a matter of principle rather than of detail. He would call the attention of the House to what the proposals in the Bill were. He thought they were perfectly equitable, and that if any addition had to be made to them to make their scope clearer, it could well be done in Committee. The first proposal was that, if an agreement could be come to, the London County Council was authorised to enter into the agreement. Arbitration for compulsory purchase was only in default of agreement. It was suggested by the right hon. Member for West Birmingham that the County Council were to fix the price.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: The hon. and learned Member is only reading a part. I hope he will go on and read the rest.

*MR. J. F. MOULTON said, that it was impossible to read more than one part at a time. He had no intention of stopping until he had put the House in full possession of the terms—

> "For the purpose of the arbitration under this part of the Act, the Council shall appoint one arbitrator, and the company shall appoint one arbitrator, and then the two arbitrators shall, before proceeding to the reference, appoint a third arbitrator, who shall, if necessary, act as umpire."

That was not only a fair tribunal, but one appointed in the ordinary way for such arbitrations. Then again—

> "The consideration to be paid by the Council for the transfer of the undertaking, if determined by arbitration, shall be such sum of money as the arbitrators determine to be fair and reasonable value of the undertaking, after allowing for the liability involved by debenture stock, and having regard to all the circumstances of the case. In determining the fair and reasonable value of the undertaking, the arbitrators shall, among other matters, have regard to the following."

Anyone who had had anything to do with arbitration knew how very vague an expression "all the circumstances of the case" was; and it was necessary, when there was anything peculiar in the arbitration, to put in terms pointing to matters which ought to be considered by the arbitrators. There were a number of things mentioned in this case, not one of which was unfair, and in order that these might include "all the circumstances of the case," the County Council would not object in the slightest degree to the Committee putting in those in favour of the other side. These terms specified were only those which the Council believed that they must have in, in order to get a fair judgment of the case. He quite agreed that the arbitrators should impartially consider all points favourable to both sides; and he was sure that the London County Council did not desire to exclude any point which would be in favour of the other side. Knowing the long history of these water companies, and knowing the peculiarity of their position, the London County Council would not have been doing their duty if they had not secured, in other than the vague words, "all the circumstances of the case," the proper consideration of many different points. One of the things to be considered was: "The condition and state of repair of the reservoirs, filter beds, &c., of the Lambeth Company, and the probability of future expenditure thereon, together with any liabilities or obligations in connection with their undertakings, which the Lambeth Company might reasonably be expected to bear." Another consideration was the probability of the limitation of the company's legal powers.

> "The adequacy and efficiency of the present sources of supply, and of the reservoirs, filter beds, &c., to meet the present and future requirements; the probable necessity of the future introduction of a new source of supply, and of new and improved works."

Were not these considerations which ought to come into a fair and equitable valuation of the undertaking? There was no objection to other things on the other side being mentioned, but on the Second Reading of the Bill, it was not for the House to go into details which the Committee could deal with. Again—

> "The legality of the charges now made or claimed to be made by the Lambeth Company, together with the circumstances under which powers have been granted by Parliament. The deductions from such claims may be reasonably made by reason of the insufficiency of the present storage or filtration of the Lambeth Company, or of the deficiency of the supply. The deductions to be made in respect of works, lands, or appliances, which have become wholly or practically useless."

These were also fair matter for consideration. [The Hon. Member then read the remainder of the conditions.] Those were the whole of the conditions which had been suggested, which made an unfair arbitration. They were all included, in one sense, in those words "all the circumstances of the case;" and it seemed impossible to suggest that they were unfair, or to make it appear that the question whether they ought to be added was a question otherwise than for the Committee to whom the Bill would be referred. He submitted, that this was a question with reference to which Committee after Committee had said that it was the duty of this Municipality to get possession of London's water supply. The County Council took powers in the Bill to agree; without agreement it took powers to lay before an impartial tribunal after considering "all the circumstances of the case." He submitted that the House ought not in a matter of this kind to depart from the custom which it had always observed—namely, that of encouraging Municipalities, the greater the better, and most of all London, to get into their own hands that on which the health and comfort of the population which they governed so largely depended.

SIR R. E. WEBSTER (Isle of Wight) said he would have been better pleased with the eulogy of the London County Council by his hon. and learned Friend, if the hon. Member had not himself been so prominent a member of the Progressive Party of that body. In reading the directions in the Bill, however, his hon. and learned Friend had omitted to observe that from beginning to end there was not a single direction which was in favour of the Water Companies. He had the good fortune to enjoy considerable experience of the work in connection with arbitrations, and he frankly said that he had never seen any directions to an arbitrator which were so onesided and so obviously put down for the purpose not only of enabling the arbitrator to take into consideration "all the circumstances of the case," but entitling him to speculate on matters upon which no arbitrator ought ever to take into consideration in a question of this kind. Had any hon. Member ever heard of an arbitrator taking into consideration "the probability of legal powers being limited in the future?" Again, the arbitrator was to inquire not only into the legality of the charges, but into the circumstances in which such powers and charges had been granted by Parliament—that was to say, into the history of the undertakings for the last 40 years. It was all very well for his hon. and learned Friend to say on behalf of the London County Council that no doubt they would be willing to insert any other clause which the Water Companies desired in the Bill; but he was afraid that when the London County Council got a Bill into Committee, the story would be very different. If a promise of that kind was to be given in the House, he thought that the opponents of the scheme would rather see it in writing, and they would be more impressed with the impartiality of the London County Council after it had shown an indication to be fair in this matter on the face of the Bill itself. It was in his judgment a very strange thing that the circumstances which were to be enumerated were all on one side; the circumstances in favour of the other side were to be left out. He did not possess the interest of a farthing in any Water Company undertaking in London, directly or indirectly; he approached the question simply as a ratepayer of London, and with a desire to see fair terms of acquisition fixed by the London County Council. Again, what was to be the position of the outlying authorities, and had that position been considered? He believed that there was no case in which either for water or gas a County Council or Corporation had been allowed to purchase powers extending outside the boundaries of the municipality without terms being imposed in the Bill providing that the outlying authorities should have the power to come in and purchase their interests on the same terms as the County Council. He remembered the terms under which Birmingham acquired its water and gas, and Stockton its water; before schemes of this kind were allowed to be pressed forward the interests of the outlying authorities had been considered, and those authorities had been consulted. What step had been taken here to consider the interests of Kent, Surrey and Hertfordshire, and to see whether they were protected or interfered with by the Bill? Another point was this, that there was nothing to prevent the County Council, after securing the passage of one Bill, delaying to go on with the others in the meantime. He submitted that the water supply for London ought to be acquired as a whole, as part of one scheme. Surely it ought to be a part of any scheme promoted by the London County Council that it should not be granted power to acquire the powers of one company without acquiring the powers of them all. There ought not to be an attempt on the part of the County Council to rush these Bills through in order to secure some advantage; measures ought to be submitted showing a feeling of impartiality with reference to the interests about to be acquired, and some care that the procedure was to be such that those authorities whose interests were to be taken were properly represented. If there had been a real desire to deal fairly with this question, the offer of his right hon. Friend the Member for St. George's, Hanover Square (Mr. Goschen) would not have been treated with so slight notice by the representatives of the County Council. He therefore asked the House to pause before it allowed those Bills to be rushed into Committee at a time when the question was engaging the attention of the electors of the Metropolis, and until the provisions which ought to be inserted in the Bills securing justice to the companies had been adequately considered by the representatives of the County Council.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar) said, the question had been raised by the last speaker as to whether all the Bills ought to be taken at once. The County Council had no intention to go through with all the Bills at once, but they believed that by taking two Bills first it would, in the first place, be a shorter, less expensive, and more expeditious process than if all were dealt with at once. They thought also that if the Committee laid down certain principles with regard to the acquisition of the Companies it would be less difficult for the two parties to meet without incurring further expense in coming to the House or otherwise; and the other Companies might come to terms with the London County Council.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN said, in these circumstances he supposed the promoters would have no objection to allow *locus standi* to the other Companies?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON said, the County Council would not oppose the granting of *locus standi*. As to the more important matter, the terms of instruction to the Arbitrator, he believed, as far as he knew anything of the position and feelings of the County Council, they had no desire, by special instruction, to narrow down and prejudice the case of the Water Companies so that the Arbitrator should not be able to take into account any circumstances favourable to the Companies. But the position surely was this; the only matter favourable to the Companies which could be taken into account was the present value of each undertaking as a going concern. From that there were certain deductions to be made, and the County Council had stated them clearly in the Bill; but they quite understood that the insertion of them would not preclude the Committee from adding other points, and would not preclude the Arbitration from taking into account all matters favourable to the Company as well as unfavourable to them. If it would meet the views of the House and obtain a unanimous vote, he was authorised on behalf of the County Council to say they would accept, as an instruction to the Committee, in lieu of the somewhat crude one which was on the paper in the name of the hon. Member for Peckham (Mr. Banbury), the following words:—

> "That the Committee have power to insert in the Bill directions to the Arbitrator to take into consideration any points favourable to either party in addition to those specified in the Bill." [*Laughter and Opposition cries of* "No, no."]

That was his olive-branch; and, as it did not seem to be acceptable, he would only say that he believed the County Council had no intention in any way to exclude anything from the arbitration which might be favourable to the Companies.

SIR HENRY JAMES (Bury) believed the House was getting into an unnecessary mess, which could be avoided if matters were allowed to take their natural course. If the special instructions in clause 6 were struck out there would be no difficulty. The Arbitrator would be bound to take into consideration everything on one side and on the other, favourable and unfavourable, and, if it were thought that he made any mistake, either party could obtain the opinion of the Judges as to whether any ingredient had been unduly considered or left out of consideration. If the instructions in Clause 6 were in accordance with the existing law of compensation they were not required, and they would only confuse the Arbitrator; but, if they referred to subjects which ought not to be taken into consideration, then they were put in specially in derogation of the rights of the Company and in order to prevent them obtaining proper compensation. If the House would only say to the promoters of the Bill, "The special instructions shall come out," no instruction to the Committee would be necessary. If the promoters would not consent, it would be evident that the considerations named were intended to take away from the Companies something they were entitled to get.

MR. J. STUART said, he could not withdraw Clause 6, but was perfectly prepared to give *locus standi* to all the Companies in the first Bill—[An hon. MEMBER: "You can't"]—on the understanding that the Second Reading of the other Bills was deferred.

Question put, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

House divided:—Ayes, 187; Noes, 149.—(Division List, No. 11.)

Motion agreed to.

Ordered,—That the Bill be referred to a Select Committee of Nine Members, Four to be nominated by the House, and Five by the Committee of Selection.—*(Mr. James Stuart.)*

Motion made, and Question proposed,

> "That subject to the Rules, Orders, and Proceedings of this House, all Petitions against the said Bill be referred to the Committee; and such of the Petitioners as pray to be heard by themselves, their Counsel, Agents, or Witnesses, be heard on their Petitions against the Bill, if they think fit, and Counsel heard in support of the said Bill against such Petitions.—*(Mr. James Stuart.)*

Amendment proposed, in line 1, to leave out the words "subject to the Rules, Orders, and Proceedings of this House." —*(Mr. Boulnois.)*

The hon. Member objected to the appointment of a Hybrid Committee, and contended that the ordinary course should be followed and the Bill referred to a Committee appointed by the

Committee of Selection. A Hybrid Committee did not partake of the same judicial character, and added enormously to the cost both to promoters and opposers. He quoted the opinion of the Secretary of State for India (Mr. H. H. Fowler), when President of the Local Government Board, in support of his contention, and hoped the hon. Member in charge of the Bill would consent to its being referred to an ordinary Committee.

Mr. E. B. HOARE (Hampstead) agreed with the remarks of the previous speaker. In Hybrid Committees, the Divisions were on Party lines and he had known an hon. Member vote purely as a Party man without having heard any of the evidence. He hoped the House would consent to the Bill being referred to an ordinary Select Committee.

Mr. STUART reminded hon. Members that the proposed Committee was similar to that which dealt with the Streets and Buildings Bill, and gave so much satisfaction, last year. The promoters of the Bill thought it was much too important to be referred to an ordinary Committee and divisions on Party lines had been guarded against.

Mr. GOSCHEN wished to ask those best acquainted with the practice of the House, what was the ordinary way in which a Bill for Birmingham or Liverpool would be dealt with. His impression was that they were never referred to Private Bill Committees, and he did not see why they should depart from the usual practice and refer this Bill to the same kind of Committee as Bills from the municipalities of the places he had referred to.

Mr. STUART said, he could not accept the Amendment, as they desired that petitions might be presented within six days of the sittings of the Committee, and to give a *locus standi* to Water Companies whose interests might be considered to be prejudiced.

Sir R. E. WEBSTER said, the London County Council were assuming to themselves the powers of the House. If other Water Companies than those immediately concerned were to have a *locus standi* words should be inserted specially providing for it.

Mr. STUART said that should be done. If there was any difficulty he would give notice of his intention to move the insertion of the necessary words.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Ordered,—That subject to the Rules, Orders, and Proceedings of this House, all Petitions against the said Bill be referred to the Committee; and such of the Petitioners as pray to be heard by themselves, their Counsel, Agents, or Witnesses, be heard on their Petitions against the Bill, if they think fit, and Counsel heard in support of the said Bill against such Petitions.

Ordered,—That the Committee have power to send for Persons, Papers, and Records.

Ordered,—That Seven be the Quorum. —(*Mr. James Stuart.*)

Mr. F. G. BANBURY (Camberwell, Peckham) moved :—

> "That it be an Instruction to the Committee to provide that the Arbitration shall be an open Arbitration, and that the Arbitrator shall consider impartially all points that are favourable to either side."

The hon. Member remarked that the effect of his Instruction would be that instead of those points which were favourable to the County Council being alone considered, the points which were favourable to the Water Companies would be considered also. Thirty or forty millions of money were involved in this rate. These were undertakings in which people had invested their money on the faith of an Act of Parliament.

Mr. STUART declined to accept the instruction, but said they were willing to insert the words suggested by the Under Secretary for the Colonies, which would do all that was necessary.

Sir R. E. WEBSTER pointed out that the County Councils could scarcely refuse this instruction. They would be prepared to assent to the Arbitrator being allowed to take into consideration what was fair to either side. Why then, if those were the terms on which the Arbitrator was to preside, was he to have specific directions given to him which referred only to one side. He was quite sure his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer would agree that every single clause of these directions was intended to depreciate — whether fairly or unfairly—the property of the water companies.

House divided :—Ayes, 143; Noes, 157.—(Division List, No. 12.)

MR. STUART gave notice that he would move on Monday, 25th February, that the Committee have power to insert in the Bill directions to the Arbitrator to take into consideration any points favourable to either Party in addition to those specified in the Bill.

MR. C. A. WHITMORE (Chelsea) moved :—

"That it be an Instruction to the Committee to insert a Clause providing that the said Bill shall not become law until the whole of the Bills dealing with the purchase of the London Water Companies by the London County Council have received the Royal Assent."

The hon. Member said that if a Central Representative Body was to acquire the Water Companies at a fair price, the transactions should be carried out as a whole, and not in a piecemeal manner.

MR. STUART said he could not accept the Instruction, because there might be Bills rejected by the House and others passed.

Motion put, and negatived.

MR. E. BOULNOIS (Marylebone, E.) moved :—

"That it be an Instruction to the Committee to delay proceeding with the consideration of the Lambeth Water (Transfer) Bill and the Southwark and Vauxhall Water (Transfer) Bill until the remaining six Water (Transfer) Bills have been read a second time and referred to the same Committee."

The hon. Member said he would simply move the Instruction formally, although he attached great importance to it.

MR. STUART said, the Instruction was in direct opposition to the arrangement arrived at by the House, namely, that they should defer the other Bills, go on with the two in question through the Committee, and get the *locus standi* upon them. He therefore could not accept the Instruction moved. He would put down on Monday a form of words which would give the *locus standi* to the two Bills.

MR. T. F. HALSEY (Herts, Watford, wished to point out that there were several Local Authorities affected by those Bills, and one, in particular, to a very large extent. He wished to know whether *locus standi* would be accorded to those Local Authorities whom, he thought, it would be very unfair to shut out.

MR. STUART said, he should like to consider this question before giving an answer to it, because he did not know to what it might lead. He was not satisfied that it would not lead to great difficulty on the Committee. He would, however, be prepared to answer the question on Monday.

SIR J. SAVORY (Westmorland, Appleby) asked, whether the Corporation of London would have a *locus standi* on the question.

MR. STUART said he did not understand that the London Corporation opposed the Bills.

SIR J. SAVORY: They are opposing them.

MR. STUART said he could not answer the question then.

Motion put, and negatived.

SOUTHWARK AND VAUXHALL WATER (TRANSFER) BILL.

By Order—

Read 2°, and referred to a Select Committee to consist of Nine Members, four to be nominated by the House, and five by the Committee of Selection.

Ordered,—That subject to the Rules, Orders, and Proceedings of this House, all Petitions against the said Bill be referred to the Committee; and such of the Petitioners as pray to be heard by themselves, their counsel, agents, or witnesses, be heard on their Petitions against the Bill, if they think fit, and counsel heard in support of the said Bill against such Petitions.

Ordered,—That the Committee have power to send for Persons, Papers, and Records.

Ordered,—That Seven be the Quorum. —*(Mr. James Stuart.)*

LONDON (BOUNDARY STREET, BETHNAL GREEN) PROVISIONAL ORDER.

Bill to confirm a Provisional Order made by one of Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State for modifying the London (Boundary Street, Bethnal Green) Improvement Scheme 1890, ordered to be brought in by Mr. G. W. E. Russell and Mr. Asquith.

LONDON (BOUNDARY STREET, BETHNAL GREEN) PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

Bill to confirm a Provisional Order made by one of Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State for modifying the London (Boundary Street, Bethnal Green) Improvement Scheme 1890. Referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 138.]

A POINT OF ORDER.

*MR. J. T. BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich) desired to bring to the notice of the Speaker a matter which he had submitted to him privately in writing, and of which he had given private notice to the right hon. Member for West Birmingham. He desired to know whether the right hon. Member for West Birmingham voted in last night's Division on the Motion of the right hon. Member for Bury, and whether the right hon. Member for West Birmingham endeavoured to pass out by the door facing the Chair after that door was locked, and whether the Serjeant-at-Arms refused to allow him to do so. He was informed that the right hon. Gentleman was in his place when the question was put, and if he was right in the statements suggested in the question; it remained for him to ask whether, under the circumstances, the right hon. Gentleman ought not to have recorded his vote?

MR. C. DIAMOND (Monaghan, N.) desired to supplement the question of the right hon. Member for the Northwich Division of Cheshire by directing the attention of the Speaker to the fact that several Nationalist Members were named and suspended on February 3, 1881, because, having heard the question put, they refused to vote; and it was desirable that the House should have the Speaker's ruling, so that hon. Members might know whether they might not openly refuse to vote, and might escape by the subterfuge of playing a game of hide-and-seek with the officials of the House.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): Allow me to say that I did not hear the question put.

*MR. SPEAKER: I think it is too late to bring the matter forward now. It should have been brought to my notice yesterday immediately after the division, either before the numbers were declared or immediately after. Hon. Members who were present in the Lobby would have observed the action or non-action of the right hon. Gentleman, and, if it were to be noticed at all, it was their duty to have brought the matter immediately before me. With refrence to what the hon. Member for Monaghan has stated, I am sorry to have to revert to a matter so painful as that was. I was not Speaker at the time, but I well recollect the circumstance. The Irish Members were called on to leave the House to take part in the Division then in progress, and they declined to do so. The Speaker of that day, observing that a similar occurrence had happened shortly before, told them that it was their duty to leave the House and take part in the Division, and on their persistent refusal submitted their conduct to the House. That, however, is an entirely different question from the one now raised, and there is no analogy between the two cases.

*MR. BRUNNER: Will you allow me, Mr. Speaker, to bring to your notice what Sir Erskine May has said on this question? In his "Parliamentary Practice," page 338, in the chapter on "Divisions," he says:—

> "A Member who is within the folding doors of the House when the question is put from the Chair for the first or second time must give his vote. If he has not heard the question put, either the first or the second time, the question is again stated to him from the Chair, and if he has entered a Division Lobby he may therefore claim to give his vote irrespective of the Division Lobby into which he may have passed. If a Member has heard the question put, then his vote must accord with the Division Lobby that he has entered."

And in a note on the same page Sir Erskine May adds—

> "The rooms behind the Speaker's Chair are not within the House for the purposes of a Division, and Members may retire to these rooms after the House has been cleared for a Division, and before the question has been put from the Chair a second time."

The right hon. Gentleman did not retire from the House before the question was put a second time, but afterwards.

*MR. SPEAKER: The case referred to does not now arise, and I cannot go into that matter now. If the hon. Member asks for my ruling on the general question involved I shall be happy to give it. The general rule is, that Members who have heard the question put, either the first or second time, ought to go into the Lobby and vote. I have known the side door held open that Members in the Division Lobby might hear the question put. It is as well, however, not to insist upon Members having heard the question put, because owing to the imperfect accommodation of the House this is frequently impossible; but, speaking generally, Members within the folding doors should record their votes. The hon. Gentleman has alluded to the rooms behind the Chair. There was a case in which Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, then a Member of this House, called the attention of the Speaker to the fact that several Members on the Treasury Bench deliberately left their seats on a Division being called, and did not appear in either Division Lobby. The Speaker of that day ruled that they were intitled to withdraw. Though Members go into the Lobby, I do not know that it is absolutely imperative that they should vote. Members go into the Lobby, but to my knowledge they do not always come out of the Lobby. I do not think it is possible for the House to maintain that a Member shall be forced to vote. I think it would lead to some very disagreeable consequences if all Members in the House were forced to vote, but it is convenient that they should withdraw before the question is finally put. Some Members are accidentally shut within the outer doors of the House and do not wish to record their vote, and there are means of escape which are known to Members. No Member is allowed, after the outer doors are closed, as they were on this occasion by the Serjeant-at Arms, to have egress from the House into the outer Lobby. What becomes of him inside the doors is another matter.

*MR. BRUNNER: I wish to add, as one who will always pay respect to you, that it was impossible for me, until the Division List came into my hands this morning, to know that the right hon. Gentleman had not voted.

QUESTIONS.

PRISON OFFICIALS.

SIR A. K. ROLLIT (Islington, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether there exists in any other Department under his control any such Order as that recently issued in the Prison Department, prohibiting testimonials or subscriptions being raised among the officials under any circumstances; and, whether he will consider the advisability of recommending the withdrawal of such an Order, as appertaining to a Civil Service Department?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. H. H. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): The Metropolitan Police Orders provide that subscriptions or testimonials from police officers are not to be received by officers removed from one district to another if they are still serving in the Police, and the Prison Department Order, copying that rule, prohibits the receiving of testimonials by any officer while in the service, or of subscriptions on transfer from one station to another, or any other occasion. In services of this kind it has been found to be undesirable that an officer should receive testimonials or subscriptions from other officers who may come under him as subordinates; by doing so he would put himself under an obligation to them which might not always be compatible with the strict discharge of his duty. The rule does not apply to the case of officers leaving the service.

INTERCOLONIAL TRADE.

MR. W. F. LAWRENCE: On behalf of the Member for the Central Division of Sheffield (Colonel C. E. Howard Vincent), I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if the promised consideration has yet resulted in notice being given to Belgium and to Germany to terminate the clause in the British Treaty of Commerce precluding British Colonies from giving better terms to British goods than to foreign goods, in accordance with the recommendations of the Ottawa Conference and of Her Majesty's Imperial Commissioner; and, if not, what is the reason for the delay?

THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): I understand that the question of Intercolonial Trade is, as stated the other day, under consideration. Her Majesty's Government have no Treaty right to give notice for the termination of special clauses mentioned in the question separately—without the abrogation of the entire Treaties of which they form part; and therefore no such notice has been given.

PARISH COUNCILS.

Mr. H. L. W. LAWSON (Gloucester, Cirencester): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether any discretion is given to any County Council under the Local Government Act of 1894 to refuse an application from a duly constituted parish meeting for the establishment of a Parish Council; whether his attention has been drawn to the action of the Gloucestershire County Council in adjourning the consideration of such request for one month, and to the official letter of their clerk asking certain parishes to reconsider their decision, in view of the provisions of the 19th Section of the Act; and, whether it is within their province to take such proceedings in order to postpone or prevent the constitution of a Parish Council in the usual way; if not, whether he will issue a Circular to County Councils in England to prevent the repetition of such attempts?

The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. G. J. Shaw-Lefevre, Bradford, Central): My attention has been drawn to the action of the Gloucestershire County Council referred to in the question, and totheir official letter. The Local Government Act, 1894, provides that if a parish meeting of a rural parish, having a population of 100 or upwards, so resolve, the County Council shall provide for establishing a Parish Council in the parish. In such a case a County Council have no power to refuse the application, and it appears to me that they would not be justified in taking any action to prevent the constitution of a Parish Council. I am informed, however, that the Gloucestershire County Council were under the impression that some further regulations on the part of the Local Government Board were necessary before they would make orders establishing Parish Councils, and I am in communication with them as to this. I have no reason to suppose that there is any indisposition on the part of County Councils generally to establish Parish Councils where application is made to them for the purpose, and hence it does not seem to me necessary to issue any Circular on the subject.

AN INTERMENT REFUSED.

Mr. H. J. WILSON (York, N.R., Holmfirth): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been directed to the action of the Rev. John Prowde, vicar of Netherthong, in the Holmfirth Division, who has refused to permit the interment of the body of Mellen Cook in a family grave, on the ground that the deceased and his widowed mother were non-resident, unless she would allow him to conduct the funeral service; and whether the vicar was within his legal rights; and, if so, whether steps will be taken to amend the law?

Mr. ASQUITH: My attention has been called to this case. The legality of the vicar's action appears to depend on the question whether or not the deceased had a right of interment in the grave in Netherthong Churchyard, and I have not sufficient materials before me to enable me to determine that question; but in any case, I think the course adopted by the vicar is greatly to be regretted. As a Bill has been brought in by the hon. Member for the Mansfield Division of Notts which deals with questions affecting burials and burial services, I would rather postpone until that Bill comes on any expression of opinion as to possible alterations in the law.

THE LABOURERS' ACTS.

Mr. S. YOUNG (Cavan, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Guardians of Cootehill Union have refused to make an improvement scheme under the Labourers' Acts, as recommended by Mr. Kelly, the Local Board Inspector; whether the Local Government Board have appointed a vice-guardian to carry out the Labourers' Acts in the Union; whether several representations have been made to the Local Government Board from Cootehill Dispensary District for an inquiry under Section 4 of the Act of 1891; and whether the Local Government Board have yet ordered such inquiry?

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. J. Morley, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): The fact is as stated in the first paragraph. The Local Government Board have made an Order giving authority to their inspector to carry out the Labourers' Acts in this Union. Representations were received, as stated, from the Cootehill Dispensary District, and will now be dealt with by the Board's Inspector acting as the Rural Sanitary Authority. The Board informed the Solicitor for the applicants to this effect on the 29th December last.

INDIAN STAMPS.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Postmaster General—whether, in the case of Indian stamps, the likeness of the Queen-Empress in Angeli's Jubilee portrait is always given on any new stamp denoting a new rate of duty; whether the late Mr. Raikes caused the likeness on the foreign postcard to be taken from the same portrait; and whether he, following this precedent, will direct that in future, at least in the case of new adhesive British stamps being required, the Angeli likeness, or one equally good and recent, shall be impressed upon them?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY, Nottingham, E.): The likeness of her Majesty taken from Angeli's Jubilee portrait which has appeared on certain Indian stamps of recent issue is, I am informed, to be adopted for any further new Indian stamps required. The likeness on the foreign postcard introduced by the late Mr. Raikes was taken from the same portrait. I cannot pledge myself at this moment in regard to the design to be adopted for British stamps of new values hereafter, but the likeness of Her Majesty is one of the points which will have to be considered.

PATENT AGENTS BILLS.

*MR. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade what the Government propose to do with regard to the Report of the Select Committee of last Session on the Patent Agents Bills?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. J. BRYCE, Aberdeen, S.): The Select Committee of last Session appeared to consider that proper opportunity should be given for some such Bill as that which they reported last Session to be passed at the instance of a private Member, and the Board of Trade, therefore, propose to await for the present such action by some private Member.

*MR. T. H. BOLTON: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the conduct of those who at present control the register of patent agents has not been so unsatisfactory recently that the Board of Trade have had to interfere to correct their arbitrary conduct; and having regard to that, whether he has considered the propriety of giving effect to another recommendation of the Committee that the Board of Trade should take the register of patent agents into their own hands, and appoint a registrar?

MR. J. BRYCE: The register is not satisfactorily conducted, but it does not follow that this matter should be undertaken by a Public Department, and, as at present advised, I am inclined to doubt the desirability of that course.

DISTRESS IN IRELAND.

MR. D. SHEEHY (Galway, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the resolutions of the Gort Board of Guardians, passed on the 16th instant, relative to the distress now prevailing in the Union; and whether the suggestion made in the resolution, that the road from Ballyturin to Gort (commenced in 1848, resumed in 1882) be now finished, will be at once accepted by the Local Government Board.

MR. J. MORLEY: The resolution in question has been brought under my notice. I am informed that the rates in this Union are moderate and that there is no increase in the number of applications for relief as compared with last year. Upon ohe information at present before the Local Government Board, they are of opinion that the resources of the Union are sufficient to meet any destitution which has so far arisen in the district.

IRISH VOTERS LIST.

MR. SHEEHY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that, in the Return (No. 300) showing the amounts received by the county and borough Treasurers in Ireland from the Clerks of the Peace in respect of the sale of copies of the Registers of Voters and Supplemental Lists, no receipts appear to have been credited for the years noted in the Return for the Counties of Westmeath, Cork and Galway; whether it is the practice of the Clerks of the Peace in these constituencies to charge for copies as required by Statute; and could he explain why the amounts have not been placed to the credit of the county and borough Treasurers respectively; whether he can state if, in any of these cases, any moneys have been credited since the passing of the Act requiring the same to be done in 1850; and how it has happened that the responsible Auditors of the Local Government Board, who audit the Grand Jury accounts twice a year, have not called attention to the matter; whether he is also aware that in the Return no sum appears anywhere audited under the heading of "Fines" for bogus claims and objections, although it is notorious that these are made in thousands annually; and who is to blame for the neglect?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The Return was prepared in accordance with the information supplied by the Treasurers of the counties and boroughs named in the question. I am in communication with these gentlemen, and with the Local Government Board, and will ask the hon. Gentleman to defer the question for a few days.

THE CZAR AND THE SCOTS GREYS.

Mr. T. W. LEGH (Lancashire, S.W., Newton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Officers taking part in the recent military mission to the Emperor of Russia have been permitted to accept and wear a Russian Order, whereas the Regulations state that such permission shall not be granted to any British subject except in consequence of active and distinguished service before the enemy; and, if he can state why the Regulations relating to Foreign Orders are strictly enforced against members of the Diplomatic Service, but habitually relaxed in favour of persons employed in missions of the character indicated?

Sir E. GREY: Permission to wear the Order has not been granted to these Officers under the Regulations, and no warrant has been or will be prepared for that purpose. It is manifest that the Queen may, when Her Majesty sees fit, make exceptions to the Regulations, and it is understood that she has given her personal permission in this case as in that of the Officers who proceeded to Berlin under similar circumstances.

IRISH MAILS.

Mr. F. A. O'KEEFFE (Limerick): I beg to ask the Postmaster General if his attention has been directed to the many memorials requesting a car service, cross countrywise, to meet the Dublin morning mail, passing from Limerick, at Ardrollus, County Clare, at about half-past eleven o'clock; and, whether he will endeavour to meet the wishes of the inhabitants of Tulla, county Clare, and district, numbering nearly 4,000 persons, for this communication, which would secure a delivery of mails and papers one day in advance, and would, it is estimated, pay its expenses by passenger traffic?

Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY: The applications which I have received upon this subject contemplate the postponement of the morning delivery at Tulla until past mid-day for the purpose of including therein the letters arriving by the day mail from Dublin. But such a change would cause delay to five times as many letters as it would benefit, and would be attended with very serious inconvenience. It could not, moreover, be carried out except at a considerable increase of expense, which the circumstances do not warrant.

Mr. O'KEEFFE asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would not try an experiment in this matter, as the extra cost would only be about 15s. a week.

Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY promised to consider any representations the hon. Member might lay before him on the subject.

ARMY RESERVE PAY.

Mr. D. SULLIVAN (Westmeath, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary for War whether Patrick O'Neill, late Corporal Army Reserve (1st Depot Division Field Artillery) has had a sum of £23 stopped from his reserve pay because of two-and-a-half years' absence in America, where he had gone to visit his friends, notwithstanding that he apprised the paymaster as to his whereabouts, and gave an undertaking to return at any time at his own expense on being summoned; whether he is aware that O'Neill's discharge describes him as of very good character, thoroughly trustworthy, very handy, and fit for any position of trust; and that O'Neill suffers from deafness arising from having been treated with quinine while in a military hospital in India suffering from fever and ague, and is thereby incapacitated from many kinds of employment; whether, under these circumstances, he will consider whether his reserve pay might be allowed to him; and, whether it would be possible to provide him with some employment in the Army Clothing Department, in which his deafness would not be a disqualification?

*The SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, Stirling Burghs): Reserve pay is essentially a retainer, in virtue of which the soldier is required to be at all times available should he be called on to serve. If a reservist quits the United Kingdom without leave he obviously violates this condition, and his reserve pay is necessarily forfeited during his absence. There is nothing against the character of O'Neill, but that fact would not justify the restoration of his forfeited pay. There is nothing in his military medical history to bear out his statement as to the cause of his deafness. There is no vacancy in the Army Clothing Department to which this man can be appointed.

OIL FUEL.

Mr. T. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether Her Majesty's Government have received information to the effect that any vessels of any foreign navies are being fitted for the use of oil fuel instead of, or in addition to, coal; whether the substitution of oil fuel for coal fuel has the effect of doubling or trebling the fuel endurance of the vessel in which it is effected; when the last experiments were made by or under the supervision of the Admiralty with a view to test the relative advantages of oil fuel and coal; whether it is proposed to make any further experiments of a similar kind; and, what is the present conclusion which has been reached by the Admiralty relative to the employment of oil fuel?

The CIVIL LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Mr. E. Robertson, Dundee): Full information has been received by the Admiralty in regard to the use of oil fuel in foreign navies. The substitution of such fuel for coal does not, in the opinion of our advisers, treble or even double the fuel endurance of a vessel. The last experiments made under the supervision of Admiralty officers to test the relative values of oil and coal fuel were in 1889, and it is not at present proposed to carry out further experiments of a similar kind. The present conclusion of the Admiralty is that, on the whole, coal is to be preferred to oil fuel in Her Majesty's ships.

DISTRESS IN IRELAND.

Mr. T. SEXTON (Kerry, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, what measures have been adopted, or determined upon, for the purpose of dealing with the exceptional distress prevailing in the Listowel (County Kerry) Poor Law Union, owing to the failure of the potato crop and the general want of employment for labourers, as testified by evidence of the *ex-officio* and elected Guardians, Rate Collectors, and Relieving Officers in November last, and by repeated and urgent resolutions of the Board of Guardians since?

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. J. Morley, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): The information received by the Local Government Board with regard to Listowel Union, within the last few days, is to the effect that the number of persons on outdoor relief compares very favourably with the number at corresponding period of last year, there being a decrease of 337, while the number of persons in the workhouse has not sensibly increased. The Relieving Officers' reports are also satisfactory. Under these circumstances, there does not appear to be sufficient reason at present to adopt exceptional measures for relief of the people. However, careful inquiries will be made from time to time into the circumstances of the people.

Mr. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he is aware that the construction of a boatslip at

Ballyheigue, County Kerry, the outlay for which was sanctioned several months ago by the Congested Districts Board, has not yet been commenced; and that the cause assigned for this extended delay is that the Board are awaiting the sanction of the Admiralty; and whether, in view of the pressing want of employment, and the urgent need of this work, in the interest of the fishing population, the necessary sanction will be given without further delay?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I am informed that the Admiralty have now given their consent to the improvements proposed to be carried out on this boatslip, and the work will no doubt be proceeded with without delay.

Mr. M. M. BODKIN (Roscommon, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, if his attention has been called to the meeting of the people of County Roscommon and County Mayo, held at Ballybodreen, at which a resolution was passed urging the Government to assist in the drainage of a small part of the river Lung, both as a relief work to give employment to the starving inhabitants of the district and on account of the great and permanent advantage such work would afford to the neighbouring occupiers of land; is he aware that the general objection which he stated to drainage relief works, that the labour should be imported, does not apply in this case, as there is a large though very poor population in the district by whom the work could be carried out; and, if he will give his favourable consideration, and, if possible, have a local inspection to ascertain the extreme advantage and feasibility of the proposed work, and the willingness of the inhabitants whose lands are injuriously affected to assist according to their means in carrying it into effect?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The attention of the Local Government Board has been drawn to the Resolution referred to. I have no doubt the drainage work mentioned by my hon. and learned Friend would be one of public utility, but I must remind him that it is only intended to adopt exceptional measures of relief by the opening of works, where the circumstances of small landholders are likely to become so straitened owing to the partial failure of the potato crop that they would be pressed for sufficient food for themselves and their families. The Local Government Board advise me that they have no grounds for apprehending that the condition of the people in this district will reach this stage, on that it will be necessary to open relief works.

Mr. BODKIN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention has been called to a resolution unanimously passed by the Castlerea Board of Guardians, pointing to the extreme poverty of the people and the sterility of the soil in the parish of Kiltulla, and the complete failure of the potato crop in the district, declaring that the people are now on the brink of famine, and urging that relief works may be at once set on foot to save them from absolute starvation; and will he give this representation his early and favourable consideration?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I have been furnished with a copy of the resolution in question. From the repeated and careful inquiries which have been made into the condition of the people in this district, the Local Government Board believe that any cases of sporadic distress which may arise can be better met through the agency of the Poor Laws than by the establishment of relief works, and the Board have authorised the Guardians, if necessary, to temporarily relax the restrictions upon the granting of outdoor relief. Further inquiries are now in progress as to the condition of the people.

Mr. BODKIN asked whether the Chief Secretary would make further inquiries on this subject, as he had been into the district, and found there had been a total failure of the potato crop?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I do not know whether it as gone has far as that, but no doubt there has been serious failure.

EXTRA POLICE IN COUNTY KERRY.

Mr. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what is now the number of extra police in the County of Kerry, and what is the amount of the annual charge for them upon the county funds; whether there is anything exceptional in the condition of the county in respect to agrarian or ordinary crime; and when it may be expected that the extra charge will cease?

MR. J. MORLEY: The extra force of Kerry consists at present of 111 men, and there are also in the county 5 men of the reserve force. The cost to the county of this extra force would be about £3,700 per annum, and of the reserve force about £172, making a total annual charge of say £3,870, all of which is levied off the county at large. Recently 16 men of the reserve force have been absorbed into the free quota, and it has been decided to reduce the extra force from 111 to 96 men. This reduction will be carried out before the 1st April, and both reductions will be equivalent to a relief of over £1,000 per annum in the future charge to the county and districts concerned. Six years ago the number of extra police in the county was 375. With reference to the second paragraph, there is nothing exceptional in the condition of Kerry in respect to crime. On the contrary, there has been a marked improvement in the state of the county from this point of view, both in regard to agrarian and non-agrarian crime. The number of extra police in a county does not, however, so much depend upon the number of outrages committed as upon the number of cases in which special police protection has to be given to individuals, and having regard to the demands made upon the county establishment in this respect it is not possible at present to reduce the extra force beyond the limit which I have indicated.

MR. SEXTON asked whether, as this monstrous charge upon one of the poorest counties in Ireland depended entirely on personal protection, the Chief Secretary would give directions for an investigation into the circumstances of the protection, and to see how many, and what was the nature of the cases which rendered the garrisoning of the county necessary.

MR. J. MORLEY said, that on the 31st December 1892, there were 98 persons protected, and the number of police employed in that duty was 134. On the 31st December 1894, the number of persons protected had gone up from 98 to 110, and the number of police protecting them went up to 171. There were 77 police stations in the county.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL asked what kind of people were under protection?

MR. J. MORLEY: I have not got all the Kerry cases in my mind, but I will look through them, and shall be glad to answer another question if it is addressed to me.

MR. SEXTON asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would see whether protection was really necessary?

MR. J. MORLEY said he would look over the cases and see.

PRIVATE BILL PROCEDURE IN SCOTLAND.

MR. W. THORBURN (Peebles and Selkirk): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, whether it is the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill this Session for the Reform of Private Bill Procedure in Scotland?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. O. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): The Government have prepared a Bill for the Reform of Private Procedure in Scotland, which they will introduce and hope to pass into law.

INCORRIGIBLE CHILDREN.

MR. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): On behalf of the hon. Member for North Fermanagh (Mr. R. M. Dane), I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether his attention has been attracted to a resolution recently unanimously passed by the Enniskillen School Attendance Committee, asking for an Amendment of the Irish Education Act of 1892, granting further power to deal with incorrigible children, through their parents, in the manner prescribed by Section 16 of the English Industrial Schools Act of 1866; and whether it is the intention of the Irish Government to take action in this direction?

MR. J. MORLEY: My attention has been drawn to the resolution in question, and I brought it under the notice of the National Education Commissioners. The Commissioners inform me they do not consider that the number of incorrigible or truant children in Ireland is sufficient to warrant them in recommending that any provision should be made in the Amending Bill for dealing with such children. It is not, therefore, intented to take action in this direction.

MEETING DISTURBED IN IRELAND.

MR. J. C. FLYNN (Cork, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord

Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the proceedings at a meeting of tenant farmers in Stewartstown, County Tyrone, on the 19th inst., held in support of the Report of the Select Committee on the Land Question; is he aware that the proceedings were interrupted by a number of Orange youths, who indulged in shouting and beating drums, and afterwards attacked the promoters of the meeting; and, were the police present; and, if so, why did they not intervene to protect a meeting held for a lawful purpose?

Mr. J. MORLEY: The meeting to which reference is apparently made was held, not at Stewartstown, but at Clonmacate, in the Portadown district. I am informed that there was no organised opposition to the meeting prior to its being held, but that when it assembled some of the lower class of Unionists turned out with three drums and commenced to beat them in the vicinity of the meeting, whilst some got on the platform and interrupted the proceedings by shouting. No assault, however, was committed. A number of Orangemen attended the meeting as supporters of the object with which it was held, and no opposition was created by this body. The disturbance was solely the work of some low-class Unionists. The police were in the vicinity of the meeting, but not actually present at the proceedings, and the promoters of the meeting did not call for their services.

Mr. BODKIN asked if these disturbers of the meeting were stimulated by loyalty or otherwise.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) pointed out that Portadown was not in the County of Tyrone.

Mr. ALPHEUS C. MORTON (Peterborough): Can the right hon. Gentleman say what is a low-class Unionist.

ALDERSHOT WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. R. W. HANBURY (Preston): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether samples of the water supplying the Camp at Aldershot, and particularly water taken from a tank supplying the Officers' Mess, Tournay Barracks, Marlborough Lines, have been on examination found contaminated with animal and vegetable matter; how many cases of enteric fever occurred during the last year at Aldershot; to what cause or causes have they been traced; and, what steps are being taken with regard to the drainage generally of the camp?

*__Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN__: Samples of the water from the Bourley Reservoir, whence the Tournay Barracks were supplied, have been found to be contaminated. The supply was immediately cut off from the Camp and barracks; and all necessary steps are being taken to provide good water from the Aldershot Waterworks. During the year 1894 there occurred at Aldershot four cases of enteric fever among officers and seven amongst the men. Out of these 11 cases, four are stated to have been contracted outside Aldershot; one was in the person of an orderly who had nursed an enteric patient; in one case the milk supply was suspected; two were attributed to unsatisfactory sanitation, and the origin of the remaing three cases was considered doubtful. The reconstruction of the whole of the drainage of the camp is in hand, and considerable progress has been made with it—Stanhope Lines are completed, Marlborough Lines will shortly be so, and Wellington Lines are well in hand. Arrangements are under consideration which would enable the sewage farm to be closed.

SENTRY DUTY IN LONDON.

Mr. R. W. HANBURY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what was the extent of the reduction in the number of sentries in London which took place in 1892; at what public buildings, other than barracks, are they still posted; whether the number of night sentries especially was largely reduced, and in what proportion; whether his attention has been drawn to the statement of the Duke of Connaught before the Wantage Committee, that this sentry duty, especially night duty, was injurious to the health, the instruction, and the recruiting of the Army, and that, in consequence of his urgent representations, what he described as the immense number of sentries at Windsor and Buckingham Palace were reduced, in spite of the greatest possible opposition from the Home Office on the ground that the place of the sentries would have to be taken by the police; and, whether he will undertake that Army funds shall be expended on military instead of police duties?

*__Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN__: The number of sentries reduced in

London in 1892 was five by day and six by night. The buildings, other than barracks, where sentries are still posted are Kensington, St. James's, and Buckingham Palaces, Marlborough House, the War Office, the Horse Guards, Whitehall, the Bank of England, the Tower of London, and the Hyde Park Magazine. The night sentries were reduced from 33 to 27. The Report of the Wantage Committee was fully considered; and, as I stated on the 12th instant, the number of sentries was brought as low as was considered right. A reduction of four sentries by day and five by night was made at Windsor for such times as Her Majesty might not be in residence.

MR. HANBURY asked whether it was a fact that this reduction took place in face of great opposition from the Home Office?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said, he had not heard of any such opposition.

ACQUISITION OF ALLOTMENT LAND.

MR. H. L. W. LAWSON: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if he has received a memorial from Tetbury Urban District Council praying that the powers of a Parish Council in respect of the acquisition of allotment land may be conferred upon them; and, if, in view of the urgent need of such powers, he will give it immediate attention?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE, Bradford, Central): I have received an application from the Tetbury Urban District Council to have conferred on them all the powers of a Parish Council, and I am now in communication with them on the subject.

NEWFOUNDLAND.

SIR FRANCIS EVANS (Southampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies if the Government will agree to the Motion for a Return relating to the present financial crisis in Newfoundland, which stands on this day's Paper?

SIR E. GREY: The correspondence at present is telegraphic, and therefore incomplete; but if my hon. Friend will move in the usual form we will give the official telegrams up to date.

PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS.

MR. W. MOUNT (Newbury): On behalf of the Member for the Tewkesbury Division of Gloucester, (Sir J. E. Dorington), I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board when regulations under Section 57 of The Local Government Act, 1888, applicable to the creation of Parish Councils in parishes under 300 population will be issued; and whether rules under Section 48 of the Local Government Act, 1894, are being prepared for the conduct of elections of such Parish Councils and for casual vacancies, those at present issued being only applicable to the past year?

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE: There are at present in force regulations under Section 57 of the Local Government Act, 1888, and these regulations apply to the steps to be taken when an order has been made by a County Council to establish a Parish Council. The Local Government Board have, however, in preparation new regulations under the section, and these will be issued as early as practicable. Rules for the election of Parish Councillors in cases where County Councils have established Parish Councils have now been issued. Casual vacancies amongst Parish Councillors will be filled up by the Parish Council, so that in such cases no rules as to elections will be required.

WATER RATE DURING THE FROST.

MR. JAMES ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that a heavy burden has been placed upon inhabitants of the Metropolis by their being compelled to pay for water being conveyed to their houses; and whether, under these circumstances, he can make any representation to the water companies to waive some portion of their water rate, or whether at least they can be asked to forego their power of collecting their water rate one quarter in advance?

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE: I regret that any inhabitants of the Metropolis should have had to pay for water being conveyed to their houses during the recent frost, but as I have no power to compel the companies to reduce their charges, it would not be within my province to make representations to them to that effect.

SIR WILFRID LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth): Does the right hon. Gentleman mean to say that these companies have power to charge for an article they do not supply?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: That is a legal question I am not quite certain about, but I have no power to interfere.

Mr. ROWLANDS: May I ask whether the only responsibility of the companies is to get their rates in advance?

[No reply was given.]

ADMIRALTY DEPARTMENTS.

Mr. D. A. THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil): I beg to ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty whether he can now state the results of the adoption of the reduced hours of work in the Admiralty Departments last year; and whether the amount of work done per individual person has diminished; and, if not, whether he will consider the advisability of a still further reduction in the hours?

Mr. E. ROBERTSON: The Admiralty are, so far, satisfied with the results of the new system, but it has not been long enough in operation to justify a definite conclusion to be yet announced.

PERTH POST OFFICE.

Mr. WILLIAM WHITELAW (Perth): I beg to ask the Postmaster General when the building of the new Post Office at Perth will be commenced?

Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY: I am afraid there must be some delay in commencing the building of the new Post Office at Perth. The purchase of the site has not yet been completed, but I learn from the First Commissioner of Works that provision for some expenditure on the building will be made in the Estimates for the ensuing financial year.

ELECTRICAL INDICATORS IN THE HOUSE.

Mr. C. W. RADCLIFFE COOKE (Hereford): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works, whether he will cause electrical indicators, similar to the one now in the Members' Smoking Room, to be placed in the Libraries and Strangers' Smoking Room?

The FIRST COMMISSIONER of WORKS (Mr. H. J. Gladstone, Leeds, W.): The cost of six additional indicators would be £350, with an annual charge for maintenance of £130. I will arrange for one to be fixed in the Terrace Smoking Room. I gather, however, that many Members object to the proposal to place indicators in the Library Rooms on account of the perceptible noise they produce. I shall be glad to consult further with hon. Members.

VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS AND THE RATES.

Colonel J. P. NOLAN (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, what is the average sum per child, in primary schools conducted mainly by Roman Catholic teachers and mainly filled by Roman Catholic children, received from the rates levied by School Boards?

The VICE PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Mr. A. H. D. Acland, York, W.R., Rotherham): I am sorry I am not able to give the information asked for by the hon. and gallant Gentleman, as these schools are Roman Catholic schools. Money is only allotted by School Boards to schools which are under their control.

Colonel NOLAN: May I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman can procure any returns on this subject either from Roman Catholic or Protestant schools?

Mr. ACLAND: The point of my answer is that no Roman Catholic or other Voluntary schools receive money from the rates levied by School Boards in any part of the United Kingdom.

THE ASHBOURNE ACTS.

Mr. F. MANDEVILLE (Tipperary, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, are occupying ratepayers, who have purchased their landlord's interest in their farms (under the Ashbourne Acts), entitled to get the compensation awarded by the Local Government Board Arbitrator for the land they give to Poor Law Unions in Ireland for sites of labourers' cottages, and for allotments under the Labourers' Acts.

Mr. J. MORLEY: The tenants who purchase their holdings under the Land Purchase Acts are entitled to the compensation or purchase money awarded by the Local Government Board Arbitrator for the land given up to Poor

Law Unions in Ireland under the Labourers' Cottages Acts, &c., subject to the right of the Land Commission to require such compensation to be applied in discharge of any advances made by the Land Commission to enable the tenant to purchase his holding.

BRITISH INFLUENCE IN THE NILE BASIN.

SIR R. TEMPLE: On behalf of the Member for the Ecclesall Division of Sheffield (Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT), I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been called to a statement just made by M. de Brazza, Commissary General for the French Congo, to the following effect—

> "The recent Treaty between France and Belgium assures to France access to the Valley of the Nile; that access to the Valley of the Nile from the south is the only way in which France may be enabled one day to settle the Egyptian question in a manner consistent with her interests; and that it is easy for France to join the Congo Territory to that of the Soudan by drawing to France the population of Darfur."

And whether Her Majesty's Government will clearly state that the whole of the Nile waterway, the security of which is essential for the prosperity of Egypt, is within the sphere of British influence, saving the suzerain rights of the Porte, and cannot be encroached upon by any other Power.

SIR E. GREY: I cannot say whether M. de Brazza is correctly reported to have made such a statement. The British sphere of influence in the basin of the Upper Nile is defined in the Agreements with Germany and Italy. I cannot add to the definitions which are given there.

TELEPHONE EXCHANGES.

SIR CHARLES CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he has taken advice as to the powers of municipal corporations to work telephone exchanges in case of their being licensed by the Post Office; and whether, in the view of his Department such work is legally competent to municipal corporations, or would, in order to be competent, require express Parliamentary powers?

MR. ARNOLD MORLEY: I have consulted the solicitor to the Post Office, and I am advised by him that even if a Corporation obtained from the Postmaster General a licence to transmit telegrams by telephone, it could not erect and maintain telephonic apparatus, and manage what is generally understood by exchange business at the expense or risk of the corporate funds or rates, without the express sanction of Parliament.

DEAD BODIES IN THE THAMES.

MR. J. C. MACDONA (Southwark. Rotherhithe): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that at a coroner's inquest, held recently upon the body of a young woman on the north side of the Thames, it was stated the body was still warm, although it had been towed by a rope attached to a boat for some distance on the river after it had been found, indicating that possibly the young woman may have been alive when first discovered; whether he is aware that a reward is only given in case of life being extinct in bodies rescued from the Thames, which fact may possibly exercise a restraining influence upon those inclined to try and save drowning persons; and whether the Government will take steps to prevent such a possibility?

MR. BRYCE: No, Sir; the facts are not within my knowledge. The matter does not fall within the jurisdiction of my Department. But I cannot believe that anyone would be guilty of the detestable inhumanity suggested in the question, and would leave a fellow creature to drown for the sake of a paltry reward.

MR. MACDONA: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman if I may read a letter which shows that such a case has occurred?

MR. BRYCE: The matter does not belong to my Department in any way. If the hon. Gentleman has any communication to make he had better make it to the Metropolitan Police.

MOTIONS.

MARRIED PERSONS' SMALL INDUSTRIAL INCOME TAX RELIEF BILL.

On Motion of Mr. G. C. T. Bartley, Bill to extend Relief in Income Tax to Married Persons with small Industrial Incomes, however earned, which do not exceed five hundred pounds a year.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Monday 4th March, and to be printed. [Bill 139.]

POLITICAL OFFICES PENSION ACT (1869) REPEAL BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Alpheus C. Morton, Bill to repeal the Political Offices Pension Act, 1869.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, and to be printed. [Bill 140.]

NEWFOUNDLAND (FINANCIAL CRISIS).

Address for "Copies or Extracts of Correspondence which has passed between the Imperial Government and the Government of Newfoundland relating to the present Financial Crisis in that Colony, and to the request for aid by the Government of Newfoundland."—(*Sir Francis Evans.*)

SUPPLY.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

THE ENFRANCHISEMENT OF WOMEN.

Mr. W. S. B. McLAREN (Cheshire, Crewe), in whose name the following Motion stood on the Paper—

> "To call attention to the desirability of extending the Parliamentary Franchise to Women; and to move that no person should be disqualified from exercising the Parliamentary Franchise on the ground of sex,"

asked Mr. Speaker if he would be in Order in moving it.

Mr. SPEAKER: In reply to the hon. Member, I have to say that there are two Bills, one standing in the name of the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean, and another in that of the hon. Member for the Rotherhithe Division—I am not sure whether there is not a third—which deal with the whole question of the enfranchisement of women. In these circumstances I think the hon. Member will come within the rule against forestalling the Discussion on Bills, and is therefore properly out of Order.

Mr. McLAREN asked the leave of the House to make an explanation. There were three Bills before the House—namely the two mentioned by the Speaker, and a third in his own name. The right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean was very kindly quite ready to withdraw his Bill, and he had made an appeal to the hon. Member for Rotherhithe Division to do the same, but he regretted to say that the hon. Member had refused to do so.

Mr. G. C. T. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) interrupting, asked whether it was fair to attack an hon. Member when he might have obvious reasons for his action.

Mr. McLAREN said, he did not intend to cast any reflection upon the hon. Member. He had made every effort to induce him to withdraw his Bill, but he declined to withdraw, and that was the reason why the House had been put to any trouble in the matter.

Mr. J. C. MACDONA: May I explain, Sir, why I declined? I was unanimously appointed by the Parliamentary Committee to take charge of this Bill, and at their unanimous request I have stuck to the Bill, and I mean to stick to it.

VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS.

*Mr. H. S. FOSTER (Suffolk, Lowestoft) rose to move:—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, the Voluntary Schools of this kingdom are entitled to the most considerate treatment at the hands of the Education Department, and that this House, while desirous of seeking a fair and healthy rivalry between the School Board and the voluntary school systems, views with disfavour any policy designed either to unduly harass the voluntary schools out of existence or to ignore the special difficulties under which they labour as compared with the Board Schools."

The hon. Member said that last year the Education Vote was taken during the last four days of a very exhausting Session, and the discussion was carried on in a very thin House and was of a perfunctory nature. The object of his Resolution was to ask the House to affirm, what it ought not to be necessary to affirm at their time of day, namely, that the voluntary schools of the kingdom were entitled to considerate treatment at the hands of the Education Department, and that the House should do all it could to encourage a fair and healthy rivalry as between Board and Voluntary Schools. He would, no doubt, be challenged by the Vice President of the Council as to the treatment of voluntary schools by the Department, and to the complaint which had now become widespread, of what had been called the undue pressure upon them.

Notice taken that 40 Members were not present: House counted, and 40 Members not being present:

The House adjourned at Five minutes after Eight o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, 25th February 1895.

DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE BILL.—[H.L.]

Bill to amend the law relating to Documentary Evidence; presented.—*(The Lord Chancellor.)*

Read 1ª, and ordered to be printed. [No. 22.]

WILD BIRDS PRESERVATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.—[H.L.]

Bill to amend the Wild Birds Preservation Act; presented.—*(The Earl of Jersey.)*

Read 1ª, and ordered to be printed. [No. 23.]

THE CASE OF MR. BOURKE.

***THE EARL OF ERNE** asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether, having regard to his statement on Lord Ashbourne's Motion, that Mr. Charles Bourke, Chairman of the Irish Prisons Board, was removed from his office because the Government thought he was not the man to carry out certain changes which they thought desirable; and also to the fact that Mr. Bourke had been denied the power of testing in Court their contention that he was not the head of the Prisons Department; the Government would take care that he did not suffer injustice in pension by premature dismissal before attaining 65 years of age; and that, if necessary, for the purpose, Mr. Bourke's service before his appointment in 1868 be taken into account, or that he be afforded an opportunity of serving in some adequate capacity up to that age, or be afforded some other equivalent. He reminded their Lordships that Mr. Bourke's and a similar case were brought before them a fortnight ago and were discussed at considerable length. On that occasion not a single unofficial Peer defended the action of Her Majesty's Government, and he thought the impression was very general that, to say the least, a somewhat hard measure of justice had been meted out to a very deserving public servant. He had no intention of raising the discussion again, but he wished simply to ask the Government, having regard to all the circumstances of the case, and to the fact that no inefficiency or misconduct had been alleged against Mr. Bourke, whether they would find him an equivalent in another office, or in considering the pension to be granted to him would allow him some compensation for having been forced to retire before his time. There were two precedents for the first course, the first being the case of Sir Robert Hamilton. When Lord Salisbury's Government came into Office in 1886 they found Sir Robert Hamilton in the position of Under Secretary, and, presumably, owing to their belief that he was not the man to carry out certain desirable changes, they dispensed with his services; but they placed him in another important post as Governor of an Australian Colony, where he discharged his duties with ability and to the satisfaction of all. When the present Government succeeded to Office in 1892 Sir West Ridgeway occupied the same post. He was not a *persona grata* to the present Government, and was given an opportunity in the Isle of Man of exhibiting his very considerable administrative qualities. If it were not possible to provide for Mr. Bourke in the same way, he submitted an alternative to Her Majesty's Government. He had looked up the case of Sir Thomas Brady, which arose under the Order in Council of August 1890. He was 69 years of age, seven years older than Mr. Bourke, he had 45 years of service, and was consequently entitled to the maximum pension; but he was given a gratuity of £1,000. He believed that he was removed in precisely analogous circumstances. There was a third alternative he wished to submit, and that was that Mr. Bourke should be allowed to count his service as Secretary to the Chief Secretary from 1866 to 1868. There was a point which he believed was not brought before the House a fortnight ago, but he brought it forward now to show how efficiently Mr. Bourke had discharged his duties. In the year 1887 the total cost of the Prison Department in Ireland was £141,751. This last year it was £100,377, a diminution, as compared with 1877, of £41,374. On all these grounds, and seeing that Mr. Bourke had not been removed in consequence of any charge of misconduct or inefficiency, he submitted to the Government that they should give favourable consideration to his claims.

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Earl SPENCER) said he would reply quite shortly. He would take one point the noble Earl had made with regard to the desirability that Mr. Bourke should be allowed to count his service as private secretary towards his pension. With regard to that, he had to state that, as a rule, in the public service, the service of a private secretary, who might afterwards become a permanent Civil servant, had never been allowed to count towards pension. But that point was not material, because in certain offices in the Civil Service 10 years was allowed in addition to actual service, and that rule applied to this particular case of Mr. Bourke, in which the 10 years to be allowed would be from 1858 to 1868, and it was during part of that time that he acted as private secretary. He had really nothing to add to what he said the other day; but he would like to say, with regard to the question of the noble Earl, that no removal from office was premature if the officer removed was above 60 years of age; and, therefore, Mr. Bourke suffered no injustice and received treatment identical with all officers so removed. It would be grossly unfair to other officers if an exception were made in his favour. He wished merely to say in addition that this was not a solitary case of an officer being removed after attaining the age of 60. There had been innumerable cases in which that had been done. The noble Earl had quoted three cases as parallel to this. He denied altogether that they were precedents. Both the case of Sir Robert Hamilton and of Sir West Ridgeway were totally different. They were both cases of younger men who had by no means completed their term of service, and in other respects the cases were not parallel. Witn regard to the case of Sir Thomas Brady, his case came under a different part of the Order in Council, and he had attained the age of 65. Mr. Bourke was retired at the age of 62, because, in the estimation of the head of his office, it was in the interest of the public service that he should retire. He did not wish to say any more on the subject, but that he was afraid Her Majesty's Government were not in a position to grant the request made by noble Earl.

LORD ASHBOURNE was very sorry that the noble Earl had not held out any expectation of meeting the suggestions made by his noble Friend to treat with some consideration this servant of the State, who had served so many years with such ability. The case was plainly a hard one, and doubly so because it was not covered by any precedent. It was only owing to the accident of Mr. Morley being Chief Secretary that Mr. Bourke's career had been cut short, that at the age of 62 he was summarily dismissed and prevented from obtaining the pension to which he would have been entitled. He would ask their Lordships to remember that Mr. Bourke was dismissed by letter which stated that the ground of the dismissal was that the Lord Lieutenant was head of the Department, and that letter contained an indication of the opinion which the Executive entertained of the character of Mr. Bourke's services, for the following passage occurred in it—

> "I need hardly say that I should be glad to recommend the Treasury to award the full pension to which you are entitled by length of service."

That showed that the Lord Lieutenant did not feel in a position to challenge the perfect efficiency and loyalty of Mr. Bourke's services. Mr. Bourke at once challenged the ground taken in that letter, and then a new ground was put forward—namely, that the Lord Lieutenant had power to terminate his services at pleasure, and a fortnight ago the noble Earl opposite took the further ground that certain changes in the Prison Department were in contemplation, and that Mr. Bourke was not the man to carry them out. There was not, however, any hint in the whole correspondence or any suggestion that Mr. Bourke had expressed unwillingness or want of zeal in respect of the carrying out of any changes or reforms that were seemed to be desirable. The noble Earl's argument as to the perpetration of injustice towards other Civil servants could not stand the test of examination, because Mr. Bourke's contention throughout—and it was supported by powerful legal opinions—was that he was the head of a department, and he had asked leave to litigate that question and the opportunity had been denied him. There was no precedent for the summary dismissal of Mr. Bourke, who had been treated with scant consideration.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord HERSCHELL) said, that he must utter a most earnest protest against the course that had been taken and against the observations of his noble and learned Friend. As he had explained on a former occasion, an Order in Council was passed two or three years ago—not by the present Government—which provided for the removal of officers in the Civil Service who had passed a certain age. That Order was enforced by the late Government in the cases of many men who had passed the age of 60, but had not reached the age of 65. Those officers were just as much heads of departments as Mr. Bourke was. Perhaps they were not so highly placed, and had not so many friends as he had in their Lordships' House. If every public servant, removed under this Order in Council, who had friends in that House, was to have his case brought before their Lordships—if the Government were to be challenged in every such case, the only object of those who passed the Order would be defeated; that object being that when a public servant had passed the age of 60 it should be open to the heads of his department to consider whether it was or was not to the interest of the public service that he should remain in it, and to retire him on a pension without assigning reasons for their action. The object of the Order in Council was to make it possible to call upon an official to retire without going into the question of his efficiency. They must not be unfair to men who had fulfilled functions just as important as those discharged by Mr. Bourke. There were such men who had been removed in precisely the same way. How unfair it would be to them if Mr. Bourke's case were treated differently from theirs! They were English officials. Were Irish officials to enjoy exceptional treatment? It surely was not expedient that their Lordships' House should be made a kind of tribunal of appeal in these cases. Nothing could be more mischievous, more contrary to the public interest. His noble and learned Friend suggested that Mr. Bourke had suffered in consequence of Mr. Morley's being Chief Secretary. But it had been stated clearly that Mr. Morley had removed him in the public interest, and if Mr. Morley was right in his judgment Mr. Bourke ought to have been removed in any case, no matter who might be at the head of the Irish Executive. He protested strongly against this plan of bringing before that House by way of appeal the cases of individual Civil servants who had been dealt with in the ordinary administrative manner.

THE MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY asked, what was the ground of the Chief Secretary's change of tone in regard to Mr. Bourke's dismissal, if, as the noble and learned Lord seemed to think, the Chairman of the Prisons Board was not the head of his department? Their Lordships would remember that in the first letter dismissing Mr. Bourke, Mr. Morley relied on the Order in Council, but subsequently shifted his ground entirely, and relied upon the prerogative of the Lord Lieutenant. This change of view, he maintained, proved that Mr. Morley had realised that Mr. Bourke was the head of his department, and that he therefore could not be dismissed under the Order in Council?

THE LORD CHANCELLOR explained that, when a Civil servant was removed under an Order in Council, he was really removed by an exercise of the prerogative of the Crown. The Order in Council itself did not put an end to his employment; it was the Crown's prerogative that ended it. This ending of a man's employment by the exercise of the prerogative did not indicate in any way that his case was not within the Order in Council, for whether his case came within it or not his service could only be determined in that way.

House adjourned at Five o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, 25th February 1895.

The House met at Three of the clock.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

CHELSEA WATER BILL.

Motion made, that the Bill be read 2°.

*SIR F. DIXON-HARTLAND (Middlesex, Uxbridge) said, he had intended to oppose the Bill on behalf of the Conservators of the River Thames, but, a clause having been inserted which met their views, he begged to withdraw his Motion to reject the Bill.

CHELSEA WATER (TRANSFER) BILL.

On the Order for Second Reading

MR. J. STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton) moved, that the Second Reading of the Bill be postponed until May 3, then to be further adjourned if the two similar Water Bills now referred to a Select Committee were still under consideration.

*SIR F. DIXON-HARTLAND contended that, if these Bills were to be proceeded with at all, the understanding was that they were all to be proceeded with at once. If the object of the County Council were to obtain the two Bills now before the Committee for the purpose of working them against the other Companies, the House ought to know it.

MR. STUART said, his proposal was in accordance with an arragement in the House last week. The Bills at present before the Committee would not enable the County Council to do what was suggested.

*SIR F. DIXON-HARTLAND submitted, that under the Bills the London County Council had a right to go into other districts if they liked. The arrangement made in the Lobby was that the Bills were to be put off until Thursday.

MR. STUART said, he must ask the House to defer the Bills, and not to raise the whole question and bring them all down to the House on Thursday next for the reconsideration of this matter, but to put the Bills off until some day when they might reasonably expect that the condition would be fulfilled upon which they had agreed. It would be much better to put them off till the 3rd of May.

*SIR F. DIXON-HARTLAND said, hon. Members would have to be brought up again, because the hon. Gentleman was going to move the Instructions upon the Bills on Thursday.

*SIR J. LUBBOCK (London University) said, it was quite obvious that hon. Members must come down again on Thursday. On Friday he moved an Amendment to the Motion for the Second Reading of the London Water Bills, and on a Division they had been beaten by a majority of 38. But 26 of the London Members had voted for the Amendment, and only 16 against, and of the Members representing the Home Counties, 26 voted for the Amendment, and only three against. They had been swamped, however, by 87 votes of Scotch, Irish, and Welsh Members, who had nothing to do with the matter. Under these circumstances his hon. Friend could not complain if the question were debated again on Thursday.

CAPTAIN H. F. BOWLES (Middlesex, Enfield) repudiated the suggestion that there was any arrangement come to between those representing the Water Companies in the House and those representing the County Council.

MR. J. W. BENN (Tower Hamlets, St. George's) said, the hon. Member for Shoreditch distinctly stated, in the Debate on the Second Reading of the Southwark and Vauxhall Water Bill, that this course would be taken. Moreover, a Motion then before the House that the Bills should be taken together was negatived or not proceeded with.

MR. VICARY GIBBS (Herts, St. Albans) thought the suggestion of the right hon. Member for the University of London was a reasonable one.

MR. C. DIAMOND (Monaghan, N.) said, he was surprised that an hon. Member should have said that he represented the Water Companies. He understood that he was representing his constituents; but if the hon. Member was representing the Water Companies, surely he, as a ratepayer of London, could vote upon the matter.

*SIR J. LUBBOCK said, he was not interested in the Water Companies.

*SIR J. LENG (Dundee) was very much surprised to hear a distinguished Unionist Member announce such Separatist views to the House of Commons. He recollected that the right hon. Gentleman strongly objected to their having a purely Scotch Committee upon purely Scotch questions; but he was now putting forward the view that only Members representing London and the surrounding district were interested in London Water Bills.

MR. J. STUART said, that, if there was a desire on the part of the House that this matter should be deferred until Thursday, he should certainly fall in with it; but he must again say that the agreement come to within the House was such as he had stated.

[Motion postponed until 28 February.]

NEW STANDING ORDER.

*SIR A. K. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) moved the following new Standing Order:—

> "Where a Chamber of Commerce or Shipping, sufficiently represented the trade or commerce in any district to which any Bill relates, Petition against the Bill, alleging that such trade or commerce will be injuriously affected by the provisions contained therein, it shall be competent to the Referees on Private Bills, if they think fit, to admit the Petitioners to be heard on such allegations against the Bill or any part thereof."

He pointed out that Chambers of Commerce were allowed to appear on Railway Bills, but only as to rates and fares, and that the utility of the existing Standing Order was very much limited by restrictions. For instance, there were Canal Bills, which were closely connected with Railway Bills, and which railways sought to absorb and so to neutralise water competition, to which this provision might be extended. Then there were questions of the conditions of transport, which often in effect became rates, Electric Lighting Bills, the lighting of shops and public works, and other matters in which Chambers of Commerce and of Shipping were interested. The proposition was, he believed, in accordance with the forms of the House.

*SIR J. LENG seconded the Motion.

MR. R. G. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.) said, this was a somewhat novel departure, and he would like to point out that Chambers of Commerce were not under a Royal Charter, nor were they popularly elected bodies. He suggested that some deposit should be asked from the Chambers of Commerce before they were allowed to proceed against all these Bills.

MR. R. W. HANBURY (Preston) moved, before the word "commerce" in line 1, to insert "agriculture," and in lines 2 and 3, before the word "trade," to insert "agriculture."

*SIR F. S. POWELL (Wigan) seconded the Amendment, on, the ground that it would be a public disadvantage if Chambers of Agriculture were omitted.

*SIR A. K. ROLLIT said he gladly accepted the Amendment.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS (Mr. J. W. MELLOR, York, W.R., Sowerby) thought the Amendment a great improvement. With regard to the suggestion of the hon. Member for East St. Pancras, it was now too late to urge it, for the House had already allowed Chambers of Commerce *locus standi* in regard to Railway Bills, and the operation of the Standing Order could not be restricted.

Amendment agreed to.

MR. G. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) suggested, that the proposed Amendment was so wide that it might include the Shipping Federation, a large and an important body affecting Labour, and therefore Trade Unions ought not to be excluded, for some of the Bills referred to affected questions of Labour as well as Capital.

MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said this need not be apprehended, since the Shipping Federation, being a body composed of private persons combined together for private ends, occupied an altogether different position from Chambers of Commerce, Shipping, and Agriculture.

Motion agreed to.

GLASGOW CORPORATION AND POLICE BILL.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet) moved—

> "That it be an Instruction to the Committee to leave out Parts 5 and 6 of the Glasgow Corporation and Police Bill."

He said, perhaps the House would recollect that the Bill had passed the Second Reading, and that the course followed was somewhat unusual. In accordance with practice, notice of opposition to the Bill had been given, and he himself had been personally in communication with the Speaker and the Authorities of the House, yet notwithstanding this notice of opposition, the Second Reading of the Bill was surreptitiously passed. It might perhaps be stated in explanation to some extent, that the hon. Member who ordinarily had charge of Private Bills was absent, unfortunately, through indisposition, and his place was temporarily filled by the hon. Member for Ayrshire, who, probably, was not aware of the usual practice in such cases. He did not attribute, to the course taken by the hon. Member for Ayrshire, anything beyond inadvertence and did not for a moment suppose the hon. Member intended to take any unfair advantage. But in consequence of the course that was taken, it had become necessary to move the present Instruction. The grounds on which he moved the Instruction were altogether apart from the merits or demerits of the question itself. His objection to the Bill was, that it contained provisions which ought to be the subject of a public Bill and ought not to be part of a private Bill. It was becoming a practice, he feared, for corporate bodies to introduce into ostensibly private Bills, provisions which really dealt with important public questions. It was a course to which very serious objections could be urged, and one against which that House had frequently protested. In fact, a Sub-Committee of hon. Members had been appointed to keep watch against attempts of this kind. The city of Glasgow appeared to be an old offender in this respect. A few years ago it introduced a private Bill, containing provisions of a public character, and those provisions were struck out by Parliament. The city appeared to think it ought to be a law unto itself, for it not only introduced provisions of a public character into private Bills, but declined to take advantage, like other cities, of the powers conferred by General Statutes. His contention was, that if Glasgow wanted powers contained in General Statutes its course was to adopt those Statutes as other communities did, and not to come to Parliament for Special Acts applying only to itself. Part 5 of the Bill dealt solely with the appointment of Stipendiary Magistrates for the city; yet all such Magistrates were now appointed under a General Statute, the benefit of which was open to Glasgow as to other cities. There was no difficulty whatever in Glasgow being included in the operation of the Borough Police (Scotland) Act. Part 6 introduced some very extraordinary provisions, against which the Procurator Fiscal, the Dean of Faculty, and other authorities of the city of Glasgow had protested. It would be enough for his purpose, however, to say now that this clause proposed very important alterations in the Statute law of the Realm, and the House would admit that proposals of so serious a character ought to be brought publicly to the cognisance of Parliament. The School Board of Glasgow had petitioned against the Bill, and had obtained *locus standi* to appear before the Committee against it. The School Board, which considered that its jurisdiction was infringed by the Bill, was a public body constituted by public Statute, and it ought not to be driven into Committee Rooms to protect its rights from encroachment by a private Bill. This was not the only public body in Glasgow which the Bill interfered with, and by which it was opposed. The Corporation, not satisfied with the stringency of an Act of Parliament containing some 600 police clauses, desired to have other powers of their own, and one of the proposals was that every person who was guilty of certain acts should be liable to heavy penalties, greater or smaller, according to the view the Corporation took of the gravity of the offence. Any person who printed, or circulated, or used any sham or imitation bank note, was let off with a fine of 40s.; and any person who indulged in private conversation with a lady in the street was subject to a like penalty, while anyone having in his possession a pack of cards was liable to imprisonment for 60 days. That was Legislation reduced to a farce; and ought to induce the House to adhere to the universal practice of Parliament, that material alterations of the Criminal Law should be embodied in a public Bill. The

House could not in honour shirk its responsibilities by casting them upon the Police and Sanitary Committee. That Committee already complained very much of the way in which the general practices and usages of Parliament were defied wholesale in private Bills. The practice of adopting in private Bills, measures of comprehensive penal Legislation which ought to form the subject of a public Statute was one against which he entered his solemn protest, and he thought the House would be conferring an advantage upon Glasgow, and on other corporate bodies who desired to walk in the same path, if it gave a specific Instruction to the Committee to strike out Parts IV and V of this Bill. He therefore moved the Instruction standing in his name,

*MR. ALEXANDER CROSS (Glasgow, Camlachie) agreed that the matters dealt with in those parts of the Bill referred to in the Instruction ought, if sanctioned at all, to be sanctioned as part of the general Legislation of the country. But he supported the Instruction as a Glasgow citizen and as a Glasgow Member, and he believed he expressed the views of his constituents and of the great mass of public opinion in Glasgow, which was diametrically opposed to these provisions of the Bill. The promoters had issued a statement, in which they said they had not been able to ascertain the specific objections to the measure. He was at a loss to characterise that statement. It was arrogance and affectation on the part of the Corporation to tell the House that they did not know the objections to the Bill. Glasgow was ringing with these objections. They would not meet a man in the city, unless he were a bailie, who would say a single word in favour of the Bill. Protests against it had come from all sorts and conditions of men. Since he came into the House he had received half-a-dozen telegrams and been informed of three or four petitions against it, and the only people in its favour were the stationers and newspaper-sellers, whose business would be promoted by it because the little boys who sold newspapers were to be cleared off the streets. The ground of objection to the Bill was, that it contained very serious attacks upon the freedom of the subject; and further it had not been submitted to the electorate in any form or shape, and had not been adequately discussed in the Town had unanimously passed a resolution con- Council. The Second Ward Committee demning the Bill, declaring that it was hurried through the Town Council before the citizens had any opportunity of considering its clauses, and their action had been endorsed by the majority of the other Ward Committees in Glasgow. They did not object to giving Glasgow magistrates plenty of power. About twenty-four years ago, they obtained from Parliament a measure of a far-reaching and extraordinary character, and since then twelve Bills giving them further powers had been passed. This was the thirteenth; it was an unfortunate number, and a still more unfortunate Bill. He failed almost to find language to convey his idea of the preposterous nature of the provisions of the Bill. Did the House know that the Corporation proposed, in the teeth of all the principles that had hitherto governed the administration of law and justice, that Stipendiary Magistrates in Glasgow should be appointed and dismissed by a vote of a public body; or that any person guilty of the offence of offering a lottery ticket for sale—it might be a lady at a bazaar—was liable to a fine of £5. That was a wrong proposal to smuggle through Parliament in a private Bill. Further, it would be within the powers of the magistrates under the Bill to send a man to prison for 60 days for having in his possession the means of playing any game of hazard. He did not suppose any well-to-do citizen would be interfered with under this provision, but when some poor working-man was found indulging in what the righteous magistrates did not deem proper conduct, the police would drag him to Court, and he would be sent to prison for 60 days. Again, while a lady who sold a lottery ticket was liable to a fine of £5, the Bill made male importuning an offence punishable by a fine of 40s. Without saying a word with reference to the propriety of this Legislation, he maintained that it ought not to be embodied in a private Bill. And the words of the Bill were curious—"any person who loiters for the purpose of importuning." Loitering was the overt act, and the House would see that such a proposal offered opportunity for much possible abuse and tyranny. The House was aware of the delicacy of sentiment that prevailed in Glasgow on the question of pictures; for instance, when "The Slave Market in Cairo," was exhibited there, the Glasgow magistrates proposed to drape the pictures. But the delicacy was not confined to pictures alone. They proposed not only to drape pictures, but to drape legs of mutton. The Bill made it a penal offence to expose in the street a leg of mutton which had not a clean cloth over it. Boys under the age of 14 years, who ran after tramcars, were to be liable to a fine of 40s., and the same fine would be applied to boys who were guilty of riding a pony, or driving a trap, or for being found in charge of a cart. The Bill further provides that the owner of any dog which worried or placed in fear any person or other animal should be fined 40s. So that it would be almost impossible in Glasgow for a cat to catch a mouse or a dog to worry a rat except at a cost of 40s. Was it reasonable that responsible men who were charged with the serious control of 700,000 industrious and decent inhabitants of Glasgow should engage themselves in such pettifogging matters as these. Under Clause 35, the magistrates, or any two of their number, took to themselves power of licensing children engaged in selling newspapers upon the streets. The proposal was that only those should be licensed who were suitable to do this work, and, no doubt, that would mean those boys and girls who conform to certain ethical models of propriety and belief. But what about the little boys and girls who would not be provided with the licence? They were to be fined 10s. for each offence—he did not think they had 5s. in the world. He pleaded for liberty, however, for these small children. He wished to speak with all respect of the proposals of men whose hearts were larger than their intellects, but which after all had put them into a position of great absurdity. The children were to be housed at the public expense, and he supposed they would be fed and cared for also, but it was important to observe that the School Board, under whose control the children largely were, was not consulted at all before these proposals were conceived and published, and was very strongly opposed to them. The Chief Constable had made some inquiries about the children who were engaged in selling the papers, and from his report it appeared that out of the 400 who were so engaged only two had ever been in the hands of the police, so that their moral condition could not really require the supervision proposed to be placed over them. Of the two boys who had been in the hands of the police, one was found guilty and punished for malicious injury, and the other, a little boy of 14 years, was fined for disorderly conduct; but he supposed that all boys of the age of 14 years were guilty of disorderly conduct. The whole thing was greatly overdone, and he asked the House to express, on behalf of the citizens of Glasgow, its condemnation of these parts of the Bill. The authority of a great Corporation did not consist in the multitude of its Acts of Parliament, or in its penal clauses, or in its 40s. fines, that authority depended upon the respect which it inspired in men's minds, and the respect which its regulations could command; but as these regulations had inspired —not respect, but ridicule, he begged the House to reject those parts of the Bill which had reference to them.

MR. E. WASON (Ayrshire, S.) said, he should not have thought it necessary to take part in the Debate, but for the observations indulged in by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Isle of Thanet.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER said, he had fully acquitted the hon. Gentleman of having had any desire to take an unfair advantage in this matter, and felt sure that he had only acted by inadvertence.

MR. WASON wished to call the attention of the House to what took place. It was on a Wednesday afternoon; the House did not meet for some little time, and he moved a count. The right hon. Gentleman was present in the House shortly before the count, but was not present when a House was made. There was a blocking notice on the Paper, but he had always understood that, unless the hon. Member was there to move the Amendment standing in his name, no action would be taken. He had not had any opportunity of reading the Bill, and understood that the duty of the Member in charge of private business was to move the Second Reading of the Bills that were handed to him. If he were to be held responsible, even during the short time he had taken the place of his hon. Friend the Member fer West Aberdeen, for all the Bills of which he had to move the Second Reading, he should have a very great amount of responsibility placed upon his shoulders. He could assure the right hon. Gentleman that he had no intention to take any unfair advantage of him in the discarge of his duties.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER said, he never made any charge against the hon. Member. He knew that the hon. Member was unacquainted with the usual practice with regard to private business.

MR. WASON said, he had been in charge for some time, and he did know the practice.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. O. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton) said, he was not a promoter of the Bill, but he was perfectly aware of the circumstances. His right hon. Friend had said that it was a growing custom to introduce matters which ought to form part of public Legislation into private Bills. Whether that was so or not, the private Bills of Corporations of great towns made inroads on public Legislation until the House of Commons instituted a remedy by appointing an influential Committee—the Police and Sanitary Committee—for the purpose of examining these Bills and seeing that there was nothing in them which should be dealt with by public Bill. Now, this was a private Bill containing one or two matters which travelled beyond the limits of a private Bill. As to one point there could be no doubt whatever. He was informed by the Authorities of the House that it was inexpedient and irregular to introduce into the Bill the appointment by the Corporation of a Stipendary Magistrate, who should be appointed by the Crown. The promoters of the Bill at once agreed to strike out this provision, and to have the Stipendary appointed by the Secretary for Scotland. He thought that the House should as seldom as possible interfere with proceedings on private Bills. They had had some amusing rhetoric from his hon. Friend, and some good sense, but he had exaggerated the defects of the Bill, and passed over its merits. Some of those proposals to which his hon. Friend referred were already the law, and Glasgow only asked to have what almost all the boroughs in Scotland already had in public or private Acts. With regard to some of these, the Police and Sanitary Committee would look carefully into them; but after these matters had been dealt with, a very valuable Bill would remain. Some of the new provisions were highly humane. The provisions as to small children were much needed to improve their condition as to the late hours and cruel circumstances under which they went about the streets. This appeared to him to be a blot on the civilisation of Glasgow, and it was a peculiar characteristic of that great city. He only asked that the House should treat this Bill as it treated other private Bills, and send it to the Police and Sanitary Committee, and afterwards to a Select Committee.

*SIR F. S. POWELL (Wigan) said, he had the honour to be a Member of the Committee referred to during six years, and he had occupied the chair for a considerable time. The case with regard to English Bills was very different from that of Scotch Bills. English Bills were brought to the test of public opinion in the district, and if the ratepayers objected, a Bill was not proceeded with. Then, in the case of an English Bill, the Police and Sanitary Committee had the advantage of the criticism, sometimes unduly severe, but always wholesome, of the Local Government Board. Every statement in the Bill was carefully sifted by intelligent officials, and every clause examined. The Committee then considered the comments made upon it. In the case of Scotland, there was no Board to discharge this work. There was no assistance from the Local Government Board, and although the Scotch Department did render help, it was not equal to that which was rendered by the English Local Government Board. He thought there was special reason why they should take great care in dealing with Scotch Bills. The Committee had been called upon to deal with two Glasgow Corporation Bills. As regards sanitary matters, both were passed, and gladly passed, because the sanitary regulations were not to the credit of that great city. If that was the case as regarded sanitary regulations, it was no justification for the proposals of this Bill. The Police and Sanitary Committee never had, during the whole period with which he had been connected with it, passed clauses dealing with criminal matters, except so far as they affected police regulations. In one case the Committee did grant powers to the Corporation of Bootle, because it was found that the Corporation of Liverpool possessed the same powers. Those powers were necessary for the protection of the trade of Liverpool; and as Bootle and Liverpool were divided by an arbitrary line it was feared that Bootle might therefore become the recruiting ground for certain criminal offences, unless the same powers were extended to both places. But the present Bill also dealt with the currency, and it placed in the Corporation of Glasgow certain powers relating thereto. This clause, he thought, would not be sanctioned by the Committee. He was glad to find that the Sanitary and Police Committee were framing what was practically a code beyond which Promoters were not, unless in exceptional circumstances, permitted to extend their powers.

Mr. J. CALDWELL (Lanark, Mid.) said, it was impossible for anyone who knew the state of public opinion in Glasgow not to recognise that this Bill was condemned unanimously, by all the public bodies interested in its clauses. If the two parts of the Bill which had been referred to were to be gone into, he asserted that there was not a Committee Room in the House large enough to contain the counsel and the witnesses which would appear with regard to it. He contended that Part 5 of the Bill was inadmissible under the rules of private Bill procedure. It proposed to interfere with a public Act of Parliament, and with the functions of the Crown in appointing Stipendiary Magistrates. The House of Commons was very jealous with regard to appointments to the Magistracy, and in seeing that they should be above suspicion; but the Bill proposed to give the Town Council power to appoint Magistrates, and also power with the Secretary for Scotland to dismiss them. In Ireland it was well known that they had removable Magistrates; but the people of Scotland objected to anything of a similar kind. Besides, the Town Council of Glasgow were themselves to be the prosecutors in the majority of cases that would arise under the Police Acts, and those cases would be tried by men who owed their appointment to the Municipal Authority. Could there, he asked, be a clearer case for the rejection of Part V? The clauses had been put into the Bill without consulting the Crown, and he objected to the policy whereby these disputed matters were left to be fought out in Parliament on the probability that the strongest Party would in all likelihood win. This was not a fair way in which to treat the Secretary for Scotland, though the Corporation of Glasgow had followed the same policy with reference to the local bodies most concerned in the Bill and its effects. As to Part VI, he pointed out that children under age were already included in several Acts of Parliament. Although the Glasgow Corporation knew that the care of the children was placed under Boards recognised by different statutes, it did not take the trouble to consult them as to the proposed legislation. In these circumstances he thought the instruction which had been moved was a moderate proposal, as it suggested the omission of the most contentious portions of the Bill. The House should reject those portions of the Bill, and should send the measure back to the Corporation, in order to let it know that if it wished legislation of this character, the parties in the localities most interested should be consulted and arranged with first before the proposals were brought forward to receive the sanction of Parliament. This procedure would save the petitioners annoyance as well as expense in opposing clauses which even the Secretary for Scotland could not approve. Another peculiar clause in the Bill was that which dealt with the Milk Shops Order of 1885. Under this Order it was proposed that the word "milk" should include ice cream. Why should there be one provision applicable to Glasgow, while a different one applied to the rest of the kingdom?

Mr. C. DIAMOND (Monaghan, N.) said, there had been considerable objection on both sides with regard to the mandatory instructions under which the

Police and Sanitary Committee met. Its hands had been tied, and it could not do anything to lead up to such useful work as the Committee had performed previously, as, for example, in the Public Health Act. He believed it had been conceded that the various decisions and precedents set by that Committee had enabled the Public Health Act to be carried out in the House and to render it a comprehensive measure; and therefore, if they were to tie the hands of the Police and Sanitary Committee the House might be taking action which it would have cause eventually to regret. The hon. Member for the Camlachie Division of Glasgow (Mr. A. Cross) had told the House that his Ward Committee had condemned the the whole of this omnibus Bill. Was that a fair decision? Was there nothing good in the Bill? The work of the Police and Sanitary Committee had been so satisfactory that this Bill might advantageously be sent to it in its present form. How many hon. Members had the Bill in their hands, or knew the details of the clauses? The best method would be to send the Bill to the Committee, and the discussion before it would show the Police and Sanitary Committee what was the general feeling with regard to it. This step would hinder the House from being compelled to mutilate and destroy useful clauses to which it did not agree. Though there were 150,000 Irish people in Glasgow, who objected to some portions of the measure, he believed the Irish population would be opposed to provisions being struck out of the Bill in the wholesale fashion which had been suggested.

*SIR CHARLES CAMERON (Glasgow, College) dissented from the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman, and pointed out, with reference to the definition of "milk" in the Bill, that infection from typhoid and other diseases could be transmitted by milk in its frozen as well as in its fluid state. The hon. Member for Wigan (Sir F. S. Powell) said the Bill allowed the Corporation of Glasgow to deal with the currency. He replied to that criticism by stating that the proposal was simply one constituting it an offence to issue imitation bank notes, a practice which had led to the perpetration of fraud on unwary traders and ignorant persons. If the clause were inserted it would put a stop to this offence. Then it was said that the Bill proposed to allow the Glasgow Magistrates to appoint Stipendiary Magistrates and to usurp the function of the Crown. Were hon. Members not aware that every bailie in Scotland was popularly elected? The Bill had been agreed to by the Corporation of Glasgow, which was not a close Corporation like that of the City of London. It was elected by the ratepayers; the franchise on which the members were elected was wider than that on which the hon. Member for Camlachie himself was returned to Parliament; therefore, to say that no individual would support the Municipality so elected must strike every hon. Member as the language of exaggeration.

MR. A. CROSS: This question was never submitted to the constituencies of the Town Council.

*SIR C. CAMERON said, it was not his business as a Member for Glasgow to say a word in favour of the Bill at the present time. But it had been read a second time, and he now asked the House not to deal exceptionally with it. Why should the House, without knowing anything about the Bill, except from misleading and absurd speeches, take upon itself the functions which properly devolved upon the Police and Sanitary Committee? The clause dealing with the appointment of Magistrates had been adjusted with the authorities of the Scotch Department, and it ran thus:—

> "The Secretary for Scotland may, on the application from time to time of the Corporation, appoint one or more Stipendiary Magistrates as the Corporation may from time to time fix for Police Courts and City; and his tenure of office shall be at the pleasure of the Crown."

There was nothing very revolutionary in that proposal, and it afforded no reason why the House should interfere with the ordinary progress of the Bill. The hon. Member for the Camlachie Division said that if a dog were set to worry a rat it would bring its owner under a penalty of 40s. That clause, however, in passing through the Scotch Office had been altered to "wrongfully or without proper excuse." A number of the new offences—almost all of them—provided for in this Bill were taken from the Burgh Police (Scotland) Act of 1892. That Act was not of general application in Scotland, it applied solely to the smaller burghs, and the larger burghs were expressly exempted from it. They were, however, empowered to adopt any of its provisions, but the Town Clerk of Glasgow had given his opinion that the adoption and consequent incorporation of any of the parts or sub-sections of the Act in the existing Local Police Act of Glasgow would lead to inextricable confusion. What would be the effect of this Bill if it was passed as it stood? It would make the law in Glasgow on a number of points uniform with the law under the Borough Police Act. It would do so in a manner which was intended to bring that about with the least amount of litigation and uncertainty. These, however, were points that must be decided by the Police and Sanitary Committee, and he would ask the House to allow this Bill to go, in the ordinary course, before the Police and Sanitary Committee. It had been read a second time, and they were not now discussing it on its merits. That Committee would finally adjust the form of its provisions, and then if the House were not satisfied with them it would be time enough for any hon. Member to move that this or that clause be struck out.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS (Mr. J. W. MELLOR, York, W.R., Sowerby): I would like just to point out that the Police and Sanitary Committee is one of the best and strongest Committees of this House; it has done its work for years remarkably well, and has been of great assistance to the House. Really, I think the House might leave a matter of this kind with perfect confidence in their hands. There might have been some objection to that part of the Bill which dealt with the appointment of magistrates, but that has been taken out. As regards Part VI., if we passed this Instruction, and so tied the hands of the Police and Sanitary Committee, they would have very great difficulty in dealing with the rest of the Bill. I think the matters which have been brought before this House are not matters which can properly be discussed now; and, I think, that such Committees as the Police and Sanitary Committee exist for the express purpose of dealing with such matters, and will deal more satisfactorily with them.

*SIR A. K. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) thought the instruction dealt with the matter much too widely, and might cause considerable harm to a great many localities like Glasgow. He ventured to disagree with the criticism of the policy of allowing private legislation on these matters, occasionally at any rate, to be at variance with public law, because he was satisfied that it was owing to our experience, and even to experiments in different localities, that we had built up to a great extent our public social law, and even public and private liberty. He thought it was a principle that they should readily endorse, that a locality like Glasgow probably knew better what it required for its own wants than any House of Commons on some of the local points. He thought that on a matter of this local sort no locality ought to have to come to the House at all. In Clauses 26 and 27 they not only had a provision for the drainage of great districts, but they had it under certain conditions of agreement. The strength of particularism consisted in the limitation of local government. There were other local matters dealt with in Part VI. There were some powers in Part VI. which if Glasgow had not got it ought to have. He instanced the provision of shelters and lavatories in public streets, the offences of pollution of drinking water, the regulation and supply of coals, and of weights and measures—which were often conducive to the plunder of the poor—and the prevention of cruelty to very young children, by employing them in begging in the public streets, often for idle and worthless parents. Those were matters which, he thought, were rightly included in this Bill, and they ought to hesitate before they rendered them nugatory. They ought to permit a Bill like this, coming from a great centre, to go to the Committee, whose duty it would be to reject some of its clauses which were obviously inconsistent with the principles of legislation. He moved, as an Amendment, that the words "except Clause 26, Part VI., and the schedule" be added to the Instruction.

MR. C. B. RENSHAW (Renfrew, W.) seconded the Amendment.

*MR. G. HOWELL (Bethnal Green) said, he was somewhat astonished at the criticisms of the hon. Member for

Glasgow, who had himself been one of the chief obstacles, Session after Session, in regard to the Borough Police Bill for Scotland as it was first drafted. He thought the Amendment excluded some clauses of the Bill which might rightfully go before the Police and Sanitary Committee. These discussions emphasised the importance of Members watching Private Bills, and he thought facilities should be given to Members to obtain the excellent Reports prepared at the instance of the Local Government Board in regard to such matters as had been brought before them. He felt persuaded that the House might trust the Committee, at any rate, to a certain extent. He made exception when they were beginning to extend the principles of the Criminal Law with regard to localities. The hon. Member for Islington spoke of our Legislation having been founded on the experience of localities. On the contrary, he believed that municipal law had been developed from the public law. At any rate, he knew that to-day the municipalities appeared to be particularly anxious to circumscribe the public law and to extend the criminal law. He had particular reason for being jealous with regard to Scotland. He remembered many years ago, when he was outside the House fighting for the right of working men to do what they now had a legal right to do—namely, to picket public works during a strike—the Glasgow Corporation was the first Corporation in the country to take that right away under a Police Act. That was followed by the Corporation of Manchester. Only give to these Corporations the opportunity, and they would circumscribe the public law bit by bit until at length the time would come when it would be necessary for the House to re-enact the public law and prevent the municipalities from repealing the public law by private act.

THE MARQUESS OF CARMARTHEN (Lambeth, Brixton) submitted, that the House ought not to go on laying an undue burden on the Police and Sanitary Committee—because, however strong that Committee was, it would inevitably break down. They were placing upon that Committee a responsibility which the House ought to take upon itself. It was clear, from many parts of this Bill, that its promoters had a bad case, and it was high time the House should give an opinion against the practice of private Bills going so far outside the ordinary law as was done in the present case. He was sorry the Chairman of the Police and Sanitary Committee was not in the House to-day, because his words would carry great weight, and he knew no one felt more strongly than his hon. Friend the evils of admitting far too great powers into private Bills. The Members of the Police and Sanitary Committee generally might congratulate themselves upon the present discussion, because it would show promoters there was a strong feeling in the House that they ought not to ask for such powers as they were inclined to at the present time.

DR. G. B. CLARK (Caithness) reminded the House that, in the last Session of the late Parliament, after nearly 10 years' discussion, and after Committees of various kinds had sat on the measure, a Bill was passed reconstructing the whole burgh and police law of Scotland, with the exception of five big burghs (of which Glasgow was one) scheduled in the Act. In order to please those burghs a clause was put in enabling them to adopt any section or sub-section of the Act, so that under the Police Act they would be able to get everything they wanted. He did not see any reason why the Bill should not go before a strong Committee, although he objected strongly to some of its clauses. It was most important there should be one uniform police and public health law for Scotland. It had constantly happened that one side of a street was in a burgh, and the other side in the county, so that what a man had a perfect right to do on one side of the street, was an illegal and even a criminal act on the other side. The Burgh Police Bill was passed in order that there might be the same law on both sides of the street, and not the anarchy which existed at the present time. It was only fair, when they had a strong Committee, that the Bill should go before it for consideration, and he suggested that the right hon. Gentleman had attained his object in the present discussion.

SIR JAMES M. CARMICHAEL (Glasgow, St. Rollox) urged, that the discussion had shown how impossible it was for the House to attempt to do the work of one of its own Committees. The action of the right hon. Gentleman himself in first proposing to strike out two large parts of the Bill, and then when it was pointed out that these contained important provisions, offering to put them back again, only proved that the whole subject was one which ought to be threshed out by such a Committee as the Police and Sanitary Committee. Why should they not trust the Committee? All questions that had been raised, including that of procedure, were pre-eminently questions for the Committee to decide.

Mr. J. PARKER SMITH (Lanark, Partick) said, there was a distinction which the House ought to bear in mind; and that was, that the rules and regulations affecting *locus standi* were very different in the case of private and public Bills. In connection with a private Bill of this sort, touching as it did at so many points of the general law, there were a considerable number of bodies, such as the Directors of Industrial Homes, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and others, who ought to have the same opportunities of being heard before the Committee, as they would in the case of a public Bill. It did seem to him that these bodies ought to have the same opportunity, at least of being heard, as they would through their friends, if the matter had been discussed as a public Bill before the House. If the House decided to throw out these parts, as he himself after some hesitation had decided to vote, well and good; but if the House decided to send the matter before a Committee, then he thought the Bill was so exceptional, that he should ask the leave of the House to-morrow, or the next day, to move an Instruction to remove the ordinary restriction of *locus*, and to allow all bodies interested in the matter, who should petition, to make themselves heard before the Police and Sanitary Committee.

Amendment put and agreed to.

The House divided:—Ayes 135; Noes 177.—(Division List No. 13.)

Sir James M. Carmichael.

THE LONDON WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. JAMES STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton), said that, in accordance with an arrangement made with hon. Gentlemen opposite, the four Resolutions which stood in his name, and which were to the effect that the Committee on the Lambeth Water (Transfer) Bill and the Southwark and Vauxhall Water (Transfer) Bill should have power to insert in the Bills, directions to the Arbitrators to take into consideration any points favourable to either party in addition to those specified in the Bill; and that any County Council and any of the London Water Companies should be entitled to be heard before the Select Committee; would be deferred until Thursday. He desired to take this opportunity of stating that on Thursday, when the six Bills for the transfer of the water supply were down for discussion, he would move that the further consideration be deferred until the 3rd of May.

QUESTIONS.

PREFERENTIAL COMMERCIAL ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE COLONIES.

Col. C. E. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, when the promised Bill will be introduced removing the constitutional disability of the Australasian Colonies to make preferential commercial arrangements with Canada, South Africa, and other over-sea colonies and dependencies.

The UNDER SECRETARY for the COLONIES (Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): Lord Ripon introduced the Bill in the House of Lords on the 21st instant.

VOLUNTEER CORPS CAPITATION ALLOWANCES.

Mr. C. BILL (Staffordshire, Leek): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, whether it would be possible for the capitation allowances for Volunteer corps to be paid within the financial year in which they are earned, and thus secure that the receipt and expenditure sides of the annual accounts rendered by Volunteer corps to the War Office should relate to the same period.

*THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. WOODALL, Hanley): In a reply made by the Secretary of State for War last July to the hon. Member for South Gloucestershire he explained that the capitation allowance was given, some time after the formation of the Volunteer corps, as an allowance to meet the expenses of the ensuing year based on the performance of the corps during the past year. It is therefore a payment in advance to the corps. To change the payment to an arrear payment would involve a double charge for one financial year.

THE ANTRIM MAGISTRACY.

CAPTAIN J. McCALMONT (Antrim, E): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whether the attention of the Lord Chancellor has been drawn to the conduct in recent cases of Mr. M'Caughan, who has lately been appointed to the Justiceship of the Peace for the County Antrim without the recommendation or approval of Her Majesty's Lieutenant for the county; whether he is aware that Mr. M'Caughan, in October last, sentenced a girl to three months' imprisonment for an offence under the Vagrancy Act, sleeping in an outhouse, the girl being at once released from prison on representation being made to Dublin Castle; that in the course of a trial at Ballycastle, of a man named M'Lean, for poaching in October last, the prisoner having been captured with blackened face and armed, by Mr. M'Gildowny, he remarked from the Bench that he thought Mr. M'Gildowny should be lenient, as the defendant had been so lenient in not shooting him; and that on the complainant's solicitor having expressed surprise at hearing such an opinion from a magistrate, he added, "Sure, he might have shot him on the mountain!" And, whether the Lord Chancellor intends to take any action in the matter.

THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GEORGE RUSSELL, North Beds): The Chief Secretary has asked me to answer the questions which are to be put to him. I must ask hon. Gentlemen to be satisfied with the prepared answers, and not to press for supplementary information, which I am afraid I shall not be able to give. The Lord Chancellor's attention has been drawn to the two cases referred to in the question In the case of the girl sentenced to three months' imprisonment for vagrancy, the magistrates in petty sessions, including the magistrate named, considered that the punishment was excessive, and she was released by order of the Executive. With regard to the other case, it is a fact that a complaint was addressed to the Lord Chancellor that the magistrate had made use of the language imputed to him in the question. He was at once called upon for an explanation, and stated that the words used by him on the occasion had been misrepresented, and that he had used no language intended to convey the meaning attributed by the question. The Lord Chancellor accepted the explanation offered by the magistrate, coupled as it was with an expression of regret for what had occurred. It is not intended to take any further action in the matter.

COMPENSATION FOR SLAUGHTER OF ANIMALS.

MR. S. YOUNG (Cavan, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, is he aware that David Coote, a small farmer in Coonagore, County Cavan, in August last had two cows infected with rabies in consequence of being mangled by a mad dog, and was ordered by the Government to put them to death; that, on the death of the first cow, through ignorance he did not apply technically in accordance with the rules of the Board; on the second occasion he did, but was informed that he could get no compensation for his severe loss; and, will the Government investigate the matter with a view of granting Coote some compensation?

MR. GEORGE RUSSELL: The slaughter of these two cows was not ordered by Government. One was killed by the owner the day after it had become affected with rabies; and the second cow, which was also suffering from the disease, was slaughtered by the Veterinary Inspector of the Cavan Union, under the direction of the Board of Guardians, as the Local Authority. The Local Authority has no authority to award compensation for *affected* animals that are slaughtered. Compensation is only payable in the case of slaughter of an animal *suspected* to be suffering from rabies. The powers of an Irish Local Authority in this respect are the same as those attaching to a Local Authority in England.

THE ENGLISH CHANNEL SERVICE.

MR. J. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: On behalf of the hon. Member for South Birmingham (Mr. J. Powell Williams), I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that the vessels to be employed by the Northern of France Railway Company in conveying British mails and British passengers from Dover to Calais are the well-known and modern English steamers *Empress* and *Victoria;* whether the following five of the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway Company's passenger steamers, *Invicta, Foam, Petrel, France,* and *Prince,* plying between Dover and Calais, now fly the French flag, and, being manned by Frenchmen, are exempted from examination for seaworthiness by the Board of Trade; and, whether he has considered the danger which may result to the safety of British passengers and British trade if the cross-channel service is virtually converted into a French enterprise, by the addition of the *Empress* and *Victoria* to the number of English vessels already transferred to the French flag?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. BRYCE, Aberdeen, S.): I can only repeat what I said on Tuesday last, in reply to a question from the hon. Member—namely, that the French Government have decided that when the existing contract for the conveyance of their mails expires in 1896, the new contract shall be given to the Northern of France Railway Company, on the express condition that the vessels employed shall be built in France and owned by a French company. The present contract for the conveyance of the French mails is held by the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway Company, and, in accordance with its terms, several vessels owned by the company fly the French flag, carry French crews, and are surveyed by the French authorities. When the contract expires next year, the reason referred to for continuing to sail these vessels under a foreign flag will cease to exist. I do not see why any danger, either to British passengers or to British trade, should be anticipated from the fact that a certain number of French vessels participate with our own vessels in the cross-channel service, but the matter is one over which I have no jurisdiction.

MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) asked, if the right hon. Gentleman could say how many vessels in this service flew the British flag?

MR. BRYCE said, he could not give the information without notice.

COLONEL HOWARD VINCENT inquired whether the right hon. Gentleman would, in communication with the Postmaster General, take care that English mails were given to vessels flying English flags? and whether he would also see that vessels flying French flags and carrying mails between Dover and Calais were subject to the Life Saving Appliances Act of 1880?

MR. BRYCE said, it was premature to go into such matters at this stage.

LONDONDERRY COUNTY ASYLUM.

MR. J. MAINS (Donegal, N): On behalf of the hon. Member for Galway City (Mr. J. Pinkerton), I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, will he explain on what grounds the Board of Control have rejected the consideration of other sites for the new Asylum in the county of Londonderry, and selected Gransha?

MR. GEORGE RUSSELL: The Board of Control carefully considered the relative advantages of the several sites which have been offered for the new Asylum for the Londonderry District, and are of opinion that the neighbourhood of the City of Londonderry, where the present Asylum is situated, is the most convenient and the proper position for the new Asylum. Gransha has, subject to certain conditions, been selected as the best site offered in that locality.

DISTRICT COUNCILS AND THE MAGISTRACY.

***MR. GERALD W. E. LODER (Brighton):** I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can state how many Justices of the Peace in each County have been placed upon the Bench in virtue of their election to the Chairmanship of District Councils; and, if so, whether he has any objection to granting a Return to that effect?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. H. H. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): I have not the information in my possession at present; but if the hon. Member will be satisfied with a Return, giving the total number of Justices in each County placed on the Bench in virtue of their election to the Chairmanship of District Councils, I am prepared to assent to a Motion for such a Return.

DISTRESS IN IRELAND.

MR. J. ROCHE (Galway, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the distress prevailing in the Ballinasloe district; whether he is aware that the people of that town have already subscribed over £100 to alleviate the distress; and whether he will state what steps, if any, he has taken to prevent a continuance of it?

MR. GEORGE RUSSELL: I have received copies of Resolutions passed by the Ballinasloe Guardians and other bodies, on the subject of distress which is alleged to exist in parts of the Union. The Local Government Board's Inspector in charge of the Union has been directed to visit the locality, and report the result of his investigations.

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE (Kerry, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention has been called to the acute distress prevailing in the Tralee Union, in County Kerry; and whether, in view of the want of employment from which the labourers of the district are suffering, and the inability of the ratepayers of the district to come to their relief by reason of their heavy tavation, he will consider the advisability of immediately providing employment for the labourers in the repairing of the roads, or in some other way, so as to provide employment for them until such time as the ratepayers of the district can provide them with other work?

MR. G. RUSSELL: It is the fact that the labouring classes in Tralee and other towns in Kerry are suffering hardships in consequence of the severity of the weather, and distress among these classes is, I regret to say, not confined to the West of Ireland. It has never been the practice of Government, however, to open relief works for town labourers. My right hon. Friend stated, in reply to a question addressed to him on the 21st inst., that labourers in towns are relieved under the ordinary Poor Law, and that the object of the relief works opened, or to be opened, in Ireland is to afford relief to small landholders who are precluded from availing themselves of the ordinary means of obtaining outdoor relief open to other persons.

Mr. D. SHEEHY (Galway, S.) I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received a copy of a resolution passed by the Loughrea Board of Guardians, at its meeting on the 19th instant, in which great destitution is declared to exist in certain districts in the union, and drawing his attention to the necessity of constructing a light railway from Loughrea to Woodford as a useful means of giving needed employment in the distressed districts; and whether he will give the matter his earliest consideration.

Mr. GEORGE RUSSELL: My attention has been drawn to the resolution referred to. I am informed by the Local Government Board that the Loughrea Union is generally well circumstanced, with moderate rates, and that upon the information at present before the Board they have no reason to believe that there is any general destitution in the Union of such a nature as would justify the opening of Relief Works.

DESTITUTION IN THE ARRAN ISLANDS.

Mr. J. ROCHE: On behalf of the Member for South Galway (Mr. Sheehy), I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that there is a most acute fuel famine prevailing in the Arran Islands; that the potato crop was small on the islands this year, owing to the insufficiency and lateness of the seed last spring; that the fishing industry has not been so bad with the islanders for years; that the construction of the south pier is one of vital necessity, and that the Piers and Harbour Commissioners made a grant of £8,000 in the year 1884 or 1885 for such a work, which was never executed; and whether he will cause further inquiries to be made as to the destitute state of the people of the islands, and cause the £8,000 to be now used in such useful work, and thereby give urgently needed employment to the people?

Mr. G. RUSSELL: No reports have reached the Local Government Board alleging that the people of these islands are in want of fuel. There is a relieving officer as well as a dispensary medical officer living on the island, and the Local Government Board think it likely that representations would have been made by the local authorities if there were any scarcity of fuel as alleged. The Board have instructed their inspector to visit the islands as soon as practicable, and to report to them in the matter. On the general question of distress in the islands I feel I cannot add anything to the reply which my right hon. Friend gave to the hon. Gentleman's previous question of the 21st inst. As regards the suggestion that a grant of £8,000 was made for a pier on the South Island, the Inspectors of Fisheries, from whom inquiry has been made, report that no such grant was made by the Piers and Harbours Commissioners.

SALMON FISHING IN SCOTLAND.

SIR H. E. MAXWELL (Wigton): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he proposes to take any precautions for the protection of salmon during the annual close time in the estuary of the Tweed; and whether preparation will be made to prevent the recurrence of the lawlessness which has prevailed there during the Autumn months of the last five years?

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. O. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): The question of law and order in the estuary of the Tweed is not exclusively or mainly in the province of the Secretary for Scotland, Berwick-on-Tweed itself and Tweedmouth not being Scottish communities. But the departments of the Government which are concerned in the Tweed throughout its course have been considering the means of removing the discontent which prevails, and a statement will soon be made.

SIR H. E. MAXWELL: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he can state what progress has been made by the Commissioners of Woods and Forests in letting salmon net fishings to local fishermen in the Crown waters on the coast of Berwickshire and elsewhere; what is the payment demanded on each licence; and what means have been provided for regulating the fishings and preventing the use of nets exceeding the prescribed length?

*THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Sir J. T. HIBBERT, Oldham): The Commissioner of Woods informs me that, in June 1894, he visited that portion of the coast of Scotland where there are Crown salmon fishings, the leases of which were about to expire; he selected several stretches of the coast in the following counties: Berwick, Haddington, Edinburgh, Linlithgow, Fife, Kincardine, Aberdeen, Banff, Ross, Caithness, Argyll, Ayr, Wigton, Kirkcudbright; and made known by extensively circulated notices his readiness to grant licences at fees varying from five shillings to ten guineas each, according to the relative value of the fishings, and the number of licences in each place. He has now dealt with the applications received by granting or agreeing to grant 73 licences. All the applications made, with one or two exceptions, have been satisfied. The licences contain very strict regulations forbidding the use of nets exceeding the prescribed length. Any proved breach in these regulations would involve the immediate forfeiture of the licence.

SIR H. E. MAXWELL said, the right hon. Gentleman had hardly answered his question. What he was anxious to know was, what means were there to enforce the law?

SIR J. T. HIBBERT said that at present the law had not been broken. When the law was broken it would be considered what steps were to be taken.

SCHOOLS AND THE SEVERE WEATHER.

MR. H. HOBHOUSE (Somerset, E.): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Council whether he is aware that the relaxation of Article 83 of the Day School Code, already announced by him in consequence of the effect of the recent severe weather on the attendance of such scholars at public elementary schools, will only give relief where the effect of the weather has been to induce the actual closing of the schools for a considerable period; whether he has considered the case of schools which, not being thus closed, have nevertheless suffered in respect of average attendance by reason of the weather, and will therefore suffer in respect of the grants payable to the schools on average attendance; and whether he will, to meet the case of these schools, arrange that the grants payable upon average attendance to all public elementary schools during the school years which include the said period of severe weather shall be computed on the basis of the best attended 400 school meetings during the school year, or such smaller number as he may agree to regard as the minimum for the present purpose?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham): I hope the measures which I have already promised will give relief to schools which have suffered from the recent severe weather generally, and not only to the closed schools. To pay Imperial grants on the basis of the best attended school meetings would introduce an entirely new principle into the system of State aid to schools, and would impose a heavy additional burden on the Exchequer. I fear I cannot make such a proposition.

MR. H. HOBHOUSE asked the right hon. Gentleman if he was aware that, as a result of the recent weather some schools had been closed entirely?

MR. ACLAND said, his attention had been called to the fact. All the circumstances would be taken into consideration.

THE IRISH PIG TRADE.

MR. O'KEEFFE (Limerick): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention has been directed to a letter of the principal bacon merchants in Ireland, read at a meeting of the Limerick Board of Guardians on Wednesday last, in which it was stated that the recent order prohibiting the sale of pigs was unnecessary; that swine fever did not exist to any appreciable extent in the county; and that if the Order in Council is continued it will render the feeding and selling of pigs almost impossible; and whether this most important representation on behalf of the great bacon trade of Ireland will be considered by the Government, with a view to the removal of any unnecessary restriction now imposed on this industry?

*MR. G. RUSSELL: The attention of the Veterinary Department has been drawn to the communication referred to in the question. The Order in Council complained of does not absolutely prohibit the sales of swine; it empowers local authorities, if they see fit to do so, to grant licences for the holding of sales, subject to certain conditions as to the marking and movement of the swine exposed for sale. The reasons for passing the Order were stated in reply to my hon. Friend's previous question of the 18th inst. I may observe that the statement in the letter from the bacon merchants, that disease amongst swine does not exist to any appreciable extent in county, is not borne out by statistics in the Veterinary Department. In the 14 months ended December 31st last, since the Swine Fever Act came into operation, 7,959 outbreaks of the disease occurred in Ireland, and 690 of these were in the county of Limerick. The Order applies, as I have stated, to 32 out of the 160 unions in Ireland. It came into force on the 11th inst., and between that date and the 18th inst. over 1,600 pigs were moved from licensed fairs in seven counties to Limerick bacon merchants for slaughter. If it should be found by experience that unnecessary restrictions are imposed on the bacon industry, the question of their modification will be considered; but the fact that about one-half the swine in Ireland are annually shipped to Great Britain, and that in the year 1894 over 580,000 live pigs were so shipped, affords a very strong reason in favour of the efforts which are being made to eradicate the disease from Ireland.

THE IMPRISONMENT OF THE REV. S. HARRY.

MR. CARVELL WILLIAMS (Notts, Mansfield): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has received the required communication from the Royal Court of Guernsey relative to the imprisonment of the Rev. S. Harry; and whether his release may be expected at an early period?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): I have to-day received a Report from the Authorities of the Island of Guernsey on this case; having regard to all the circumstances, I have come to the conclusion that it is one which justifies my recommending the remission of the remainder of the sentence.

EXTRA POLICE IN COUNTY WATERFORD.

Mr. P. J. POWER (Waterford, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the force of extra police has been removed from the county Waterford; and, if so, when the force was removed?

Mr. GEORGE RUSSELL: The extra force of Waterford County was abolished from the 1st September last, and the final claim in respect of the cost of this force, namely, for period from 1st April to 31st August, 1894, will be dealt with by the Grand Jury at the next Assizes.

LOUGH ERNE DRAINAGE SCHEME.

Mr. R. M. DANE (Fermanagh, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether his attention has been called to the recent trial in the Exchequer Division of the High Court of Justice in Ireland of the action of the Commissioners of Public Works v. Mr. John Grey Vesey Porter, for the recovery of drainage charges under an award made and enrolled in connection with the Erne Lough and River Drainage Acts; whether he has observed that it was proved that a sum of £106,000 over and above the approved estimates has been advanced by the said Commissioners, and now forms, in addition to the amount of the original estimate, a charge upon and payable out of the lands within the drainage area; whether the outlay of the said sum of £106,000 in excess of the original estimate was due to the carrying out of certain navigation works insisted upon by the Lords of Her Majesty's Treasury; and whether, having regard to the great hardship caused by so heavy an impost, and in compliance with the unanimous desire of the persons affected, the Government will cause an inquiry to be held locally, independent of the Commissioners of Public Works, to investigate the facts, with the view to a grant in aid being made by the Treasury?

***Sir J. T. HIBBERT**: I have not seen the Reports of the trial to which my hon. Friend refers, but he will find full particulars of the Lough Erne Drainage Scheme in the Return presented to

Parliament on August 5th, 1891, House of Commons Paper 414. Nothing has since occurred to make me differ from the opinion of my predecessors that it is not necessary to hold a local investigation.

INDUSTRIAL TRAINING SHIPS.

Mr. R. W. HANBURY (Preston): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to a statement by Captain Bosanquet, R.N., Inspector of Training Ships, made to the Plymouth Chamber of Commerce, to the effect that not more than 60 per cent. of the lads of the mercantile and industrial training ships ever went to sea, and a very much larger percentage only went for the first voyage, chiefly because there was no regular communication between these ships and the shipping offices of large mercantile ports, and that if a central office of this kind were established under the Board of Trade a very great difficulty would be overcome; and whether the Board of Trade intend to take any step in this direction?

Mr. BRYCE: My attention has not been called to the suggestion referred to in the Question, but if the statement in full is sent to the Board of Trade, it shall be very carefully considerd. The whole subject is now receiving my attention.

SIGNALS FOR PILOTS.

Mr. H. S. FOSTER (Suffolk, Lowestoft): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he is aware that very great trouble, inconvenience, and misunderstanding is frequently caused at Lowestoft and other ports in consequence of vessels using signals for pilots which are really signals of distress; whether inquiry into this matter, with a view to its remedy, will be within the scope of the Commission upon Signals at Sea; and whether steps will be taken to ensure the presence at that Commission of practical seamen?

Mr. BRYCE: I have received no complaints of distress signals being mistaken for pilot signals, and I am advised that if the several regulations are complied with no confusion ought to arise. I do not know to what Commission the hon. Member refers. No Royal Commission upon Signals at Sea is in contemplation. If, however, the question refers to the proposed Committee on the Fog Signals recommended by the Washington Conference and adopted by the Maritime Powers, I do not think the matter mentioned in the question one which it would be proper to refer to that Committee, even if any inquiry into the matter were shown to be necessary.

Mr. FOSTER: The mention of a Commission was a mistake in the printing of the question. My reference was to the Committee.

THE STRAND UNION, EDMONTON.

Mr. H. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that John Scott, an inmate of the Strand Union, Edmonton, fell or threw himself over a handrail on some stairs in the Union on 3rd February, and alighted on the stone pavement below; that the doctor only appears to have visited him some hours after the occurrence; that he died the next morning, and that no inquest took place on the body of the unfortunate man; and whether he will order an inquest to be held?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: I will answer the question. The Local Government Board have communicated with the Guardians as to this case, and one of the inspectors of the Board has visited the Workhouse and made inquiries with regard to it. I am informed that no inquest took place because the Medical Officer, who seems to have been under some misapprehension as to the nature of the fall, and to have regarded it as the result of commencing effusion on the brain, considered it unnecessary. The Guardians have held an inquiry into the case, and have informed the Medical Officer that he would have displayed a better judgment had he communicated the facts to the Coroner. In this view I concur, but as the case has been fully investigated by the Medical Inspector of the Local Government Board and by the Guardians, it does not appear to be requisite that an inquest should now be held with respect to it.

PARISH COUNCIL ALLOTMENTS.

Mr. LEONARD COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether a member of a Parish Council can take or hold an allotment under the Council?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: If a member of a Parish Council takes an allotment under the Council the question will arise whether he thereby becomes disqualified for holding his office of Councillor. I have no power to decide this question, but, according to the best opinion I have been able to form, he is not disqualified.

CELLAR BAKEHOUSES.

Mr. R. W. HANBURY: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board what are the powers of the Board with regard to the erection or closing of cellar bakehouses; whether any licence is required before opening an underground bakehouse; whether such a bakehouse has to be registered within a definite time after opening; and, if so, whether registration is made conditional upon the fitness of the premises; and, what are the rules as to the inspection of such bakehouses, and how often are they inspected?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: The Local Government Board have no powers with regard to the erection or closing of cellar bakehouses, and I am not aware that such a bakehouse has either to be licensed or registered. Sanitary authorities in London and District Councils elsewhere have for the purposes of their duties with respect to bakehouses powers of inspection and entry, but it rests with them to determine when inspections shall be made. The Local Government Board have no power to prescribe rules on the subject.

BRITISH AND PORTUGUESE SPHERES NORTH OF THE ZAMBESI.

Mr. H. LABOUCHERE: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he can say what is the line of demarcation between the British and Portuguese spheres of influence on the north side of the Zambesi; and whether Her Majesty's Government recognises that all treaties between the Portuguese and the Native chiefs within the Portuguese sphere of influence are matters which concern alone the Portuguese and the native chiefs with whom they are made?

The UNDER SECRETARY for the COLONIES (Sir E. Grey, Northumberland, Berwick): The line of demarcation is that defined in the Treaty of 1891, and the subsequent agreement of 1893 between Her Majesty's Government and Portugal. I cannot say what the full scope of any treaties between the Portuguese and Native chiefs may be without knowing what treaties are referred to.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: What I wish to know is whether the Government regard all treaties entered into between the Portuguese and the Native chiefs as matters in which they are concerned?

Sir E. GREY: I cannot make a general statement of that kind, because it is conceivable that treaties with which we have no direct concern may be made, and may have an injurious effect on British trade. I do not say that any such treaty exists; but I cannot make a general statement such as the hon. Member desires.

VALUATION OF GOVERNMENT PROPERTY IN LONDON.

Mr. R. G. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether his attention has been called to the fact that Mr. L. Hayter, in a work entitled "The Financial Relations between London and the Imperial Exchequer," estimates the under valuation of Government property in London to be £300,000 a year, which means a loss for London of at least £87,500 per annum in rates; and whether the Government propose this Session to give relief to London ratepayers to this extent?

*Mr. BARTLEY (Islington, N.) also asked whether any local authorities had applied to the Treasury to consider the valuation of Government property in London; and, if so, whether he could state how many and with what results?

*Sir J. HIBBERT: The Treasury cannot accept Mr. Hayter's estimates of the under valuation of Government property in London. The subject, however, has been and is receiving their most careful consideration. Applications have been received from nine of the principal vestries and assessment authorities of the Metropolis. Of these, personal interviews have been held with representatives of four, and the claims of the most important of them all—viz., the vestry of the united parishes of St. Margaret and St. John, Westminster—have been already settled to their expressed satisfaction. The others are being dealt with in a manner which I trust will be equally satisfactory.

Mr. R. G. WEBSTER: Will the right hon. Gentleman be able to give the House further information with regard to the whole of the cases when the House is in Committee of Supply?

*Sir J. T. HIBBERT: Certainly.

Sir A. K. ROLLIT (Islington, S.): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether any protest has been made against the valuation of the Government values, and whether the satisfaction expressed has been based on an agreement as to the real value, or whether it is because of a disclaimer of legality?

*Sir J. T. HIBBERT: No, Sir. The letter received was from the united vestries as to the arrangement come to by vestries and the Government valuer, and they have expressed their entire satisfaction with the result. I am not in a position to express what the amount is, but I think it will be satisfactory to my hon. Friend.

THE SUBJECT OF CESS AND STENT.

Mr. W. WHITELAW (Perth): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will deal during the present Session with the subject of cess and stent on the lines of the memorial presented last year by the convention of Royal burghs?

*The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. B. Balfour, Clackmannan): A Bill has been prepared to deal with this matter in the direction indicated in the question, and I hope it may be possible to introduce it during the present Session.

THE VOTES OF ILLITERATES.

Mr. R. G. WEBSTER: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Government, in accordance with a resolution of the House carried in 1891, propose to bring in a measure to repeal the clauses in the Ballot Act which permit the illiterate vote?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir W. Harcourt, Derby): We have no intention of introducing any such Bill.

THE IMPORTATION OF PRISON-MADE GOODS.

COLONEL **HOWARD VINCENT**: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when Her Majesty's Government will introduce the Bill to restrict the importation of goods made in foreign prisons by the forced labour of convicts and felons, in accordance with the unanimous Resolution of the House on February 19?

SIR **W. HARCOURT**: The Government stated that this is a matter that cannot be undertaken without careful inquiry, and I am not able to state when the Government will introduce the Bill. They will make inquiry, and it will be after that inquiry.

COLONEL **HOWARD VINCENT**: As the right hon. Gentleman was not present in the House on Tuesday last, I wish to ask whether he has read the Resolution of the House, which declared that it is incumbent on Her Majesty's Government, in the interests of the industrial classes of the United Kingdom, at once to take steps to restrict the importation of foreign prison-made goods, and whether he proposes to disregard that unanimous Resolution of the House?

SIR **W. HARCOURT**: No, Sir; I have no intention of proposing anything of the kind. On the contrary. At the same time the Government cannot undertake to deal without consideration with a matter which in their opinion requires consideration.

MR. **JAMES LOWTHER** (Kent, Thanet): How long will the consideration take?

SIR **W. HARCOURT**: That I cannot say.

COLONEL **HOWARD VINCENT**: I will repeat the question.

THE NIGER COAST PROTECTORATE.

MR. **J. W. LOWTHER** (Cumberland, Penrith): I beg to ask the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government have received any information from Sir Claude Macdonald at Akassa in regard to the hostilities which are reported in the papers to-day and Saturday, and if he could state anything in regard to the general position of affairs at present existing on the Niger Coast Protectorate?

SIR **E. GREY**: We have received a telegram from Sir Claude Macdonald to say that the town of Nimbo was destroyed after sharp fighting on Friday. I regret to say that Lieutenant Taylor and two men were killed and five were wounded; but the military operations have been quite successful.

MR. **H. LABOUCHERE**: Can the right hon. Gentleman state how many of the natives were killed?

SIR **E. GREY**: The telegram makes no statement on that point.

SIR HENRY LOCH.

*SIR **E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT** (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I beg to ask the Under Secretary for the Colonies whether he can inform the House on what day Sir Henry Loch's term of office as High Commissioner will expire, and on what day he intends to return to this country?

MR. **SYDNEY BUXTON**: Sir Henry Loch's tenure of office expires in November. In the ordinary course he would be entitled to a few months' leave of absence, and he would start by the first steamer leaving the Cape. I would like just to say, as a question has been asked, that there is no truth of any sort of the kind in the rumours that have appeared in the papers either as to Sir Henry Loch's resignation or as to his recall. He is coming back in the ordinary course, and the Government highly appreciate his services in South Africa.

THE IRISH LAND BILL.

MR. **W. E. MACARTNEY** (Antrim, S.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what course the Government propose to take with the Land Law (Ireland) Bill—the second order on the paper—in case the debate on the first order—the Welsh Disestablishment Bill—concludes this evening.

SIR **W. HARCOURT**: I am unable to make any statement with regard to the course to be taken with that Bill. I am sorry the Chief Secretary is prevented from being here by illness.

MR. **MACARTNEY**: Can the right hon. gentleman state that the Bill will not be taken before Monday?

SIR **W. HARCOURT**: I cannot say.

MR. **T. W. RUSSELL** (Tyrone, S.): I wish to ask the right hon. gentleman whether he will adhere to the arrangement made by the Chief Secretary that, when the first reading stage of the Welsh

Church Bill is disposed of, the Irish Land Bill will be proceeded with.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I hope so; if the Chief Secretary so stated.

THE ESTIMATES.

Mr. BARTLEY asked whether there would be any supplementary estimates this year, and when they would be brought on.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I am sorry to say there will. I wish I could answer that question; but, of course, we will bring them on as soon as we conveniently can.

Viscount CRANBORNE (Rochester) asked when the vote on Account would be taken.

Sir W. HARCOURT: We have not approached that yet. It is a matter I have not considered.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

WELSH DISESTABLISHMENT BILL.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. H. H. Asquith, Fife, E.) in rising to move for leave to introduce

> "A Bill to terminate the Establishment of the Church of England in Wales and Monmouthshire, and to make provision in respect of the Temporalities thereof,"

said: In making the Motion which stands in my name, I shall trespass for a very short time indeed upon the attention of the House. I was rebuked when I asked for leave to bring in this Bill last year because I did not enter at any length into the large and highly controversial questions of policy which proposals of this kind necessarily raise, and which agitate Parliament and the country. I pointed out then what I venture now to repeat, in justification of myself in adopting a similar course, that if I abstain from going into these matters now, it is not in any degree because I underrate their gravity or shrink from their discussion. At the proper time and at the proper stage (that is to say, on the Second Reading) I shall be perfectly prepared, in accordance with what used to be the uniform practice and usage of this House—[*Ministerial cheers, and Opposition cries of* "No!"] An hon. Member says "No." I would remind him that the Irish Church Bill—a measure, as I pointed out last year, of much greater complexity than the measure I am now introducing—was introduced by my right hon. Friend the Member for Midlothian in a speech of some three hours' duration, and was, with the assent, and I think at the suggestion, of Mr. Disraeli, then the Leader of the Opposition, allowed to receive its First Reading before dinner on the same night. As far as I and the Government are concerned we do not intend to contribute to what we regard as the growing abuse of making the First Reading an occasion for a Second Reading Debate. Acting on that assumption, it would be, under ordinary circumstances, my duty to explain in considerable detail, with a view of laying them before the House, the provisions of this measure; but as I discharged that task to the best of my ability, with great elaboration, and, I fear, at excessive length, when I introduced what is, to all intents and purposes, identically the same measure last year, I hope the House will not think me guilty of any disrespect to them or of any disparagement of the importance of the subject if I confine myself to a brief recapitulation of the main provisions of the Bill. Shortly, our proposals are these: we propose that on January 1, 1897, the Church of England, as far as it is established in Wales and Monmouthshire, shall cease to be an Established Church. From and after that date both the privileges and duties incident to the status of Establishment will come to an end. The coercive jurisdiction of the Ecclesiastical Courts will cease. What is now ecclesiastical law will be enforceable, as far as it affects the discipline of the clergy and the doctrines and ceremonies of the Church, by way of contract, and as far as it affects the use of property, by way of trust. Provision will be made in the Bill for the formation of a representative Church body; and power is given to the Bishops and clergy and laity of the whole synod to frame a constitution and generally to legislate in ecclesiastical matters for themselves. Shortly stated, that is the effect of the provisions of the Bill as far as they relate to Disestablishment. I come now to the other side and aspect of the subject—the

Disendowment of the Church. There I may remind the House that we are dealing here with ecclesiastical revenue arising only from Wales itself; and throughout, in speaking of Wales, it must be understood that I include the County of Monmouth. The whole of that revenue, for whatever purposes it is now applied—that is to say, whether in Wales or England—comes within the scope of the Bill. On the other hand. ecclesiastical revenue arising in England, parts of which now, under the operations of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, go to the benefit of the Church in Wales, do not come under the scope of the Bill. The result is, that in Wales we have to dispose of a gross annual revenue of £279,000, which, as I pointed out last year, may be conveniently divided into two distinct categories. First of all there is the parochial revenue, which is at present attached to and enjoyed by parochial benefices, and which amounts in rounds figures to a gross sum of £233,000 a year. On the other hand, there is what I call the central revenue of £46,000, which is made up by the incomes of capitular and episcopal states and the revenues received from Wales by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for disposal in Wales. For strict accuracy, and to make the matter clear, I ought to point out, before I pass from this, that we have excluded from the operation of the Bill what are called private benefactions; and that for this purpose we have treated all private benefactions newly created since 1703, under the constitution of Queen Anne's Bounty, as sums which ought to remain the property of the Disestablished and Disendowed Church. In dealing with this fund we have acted on two principles, to which for the moment I will ask the special attention of the House. The first principle is this: we have endeavoured to preserve the *corpus* of the ecclesiastical property in Wales for local and national purposes, and to prevent its alienation and dissipation; and to keep it, as far as legislation can keep it, as an available asset for the purposes to which we propose that it should be applied. Our second principle is this: we have aimed throughout at providing that, as far as this property and the income arising from it is at present derived from and attached to localities, they shall continue to be subject to the elastic limitations which I will refer to later, and be locally applied. For the purpose of applying these principles to the circumstances of the case, we call into existence, as was done in the case of the Irish Church Act, a Commission, which in constitution and in the status and emoluments of its members will be the same as that described last year, and as this is a matter of comparatively unimportant detail, the House will forgive me for not going into it again. The function of these Commissioners will, in the first instance, be to secure the vesting of the various classes or heads of property the income of which is at present enjoyed by the Church in Wales. It will be their duty for this purpose to transfer the churches and parsonages to the representative body. The burial-grounds and glebes will be transferred in rural parishes to the Parish Council, and in urban parishes to the District Council. and in county boroughs to the Town Council of the borough. Tithe rent-charge—and I need hardly remind the House that it is by far the largest and most valuable ecclesiastical asset in Wales—will be vested by the Commissioners in the County Council of the county in which the land is situated from which the tithe arises. The whole of the other property of the Church will remain vested in the Commissioners themselves.

*Sir F. S. POWELL (Wigan): What about cathedrals?

Mr. ASQUITH: The provision with respect to them is the same as in the Bill of last year—that is to say, the property of cathedrals will be vested in the Commissioners, on whom will lie the obligation of maintaining and keeping them in repair, subject to the right of the Disestablished Church to continue to use them for their present purpose. Now, Sir, I come for a moment to the provision made in the Bill for existing interests. Here, again, we have adopted a plan which we think will avoid or minimise the dangers which the practical working of the Irish Church Act has shown to exist and to be very real. We propose that every person who has at present a vested interest in an ecclesiastical office shall, as long as he continues to discharge the duties of that office, receive the emoluments which he at present enjoys. In order to prevent the dangers which I pointed out last year—the dangers and hardships to the Church which would undoubtedly ensue from stereotyping the existing arrangement in this respect—in order to prevent the immobility of the clergy, and to permit of the promotion of men from one office to another, we have provided an alternative scale of compensation under which the beneficiary may receive an annuity on the lower scale, with the consent of the representative body, and when he adopts these terms it will not be a condition of his enjoyment of that annuity that he should continue to discharge the duties of the office which he at present holds. Next, as to livings in the gift of private patrons; and these, I may say, in Wales are only one-third of the total livings in the country—344 out 970. It is here proposed to follow the precedent set by the right hon. Gentleman opposite in the Act of 1874 for the Abolition of Patronage in the Scotch Church, and to provide that where a patron chooses to claim he may receive a sum by way of compensation for the loss of his right not exceeding one year's net emolument for his living on the basis of three years before the Bill becomes law. Then I come to consider the ultimate application of the property. The central fund, which consists of £46,000 gross, we propose, in the first instance, shall be charged with the expense of administering the Act. The surplus will be supplied by the Commissioners to the purpose sanctioned in the Bill, with the provision that of the balance of this central fund not less than two-thirds shall be applied to higher education. The local funds. which constitute by far the largest item of the property of the Church, and of which the tithe rent-charge is itself the most important detail, will be applied in accordance with the schemes framed by the County Councils with the approval of the Commissioners. As this was the point which excited the largest amount of hostile criticism from those who accepted the principle of the Bill, I think I may say two or three words, in passing, by way of justification. It was laid down as a principle that these local funds should be locally applied. It is perfectly true that if you treat the property of the Church in Wales as one and indivisible, and throw it into one central fund, and then proceed to distribute it according to population—which is the only alternative to the scheme the Government lay down—you would be led to startling results. Let me give the House, for the purpose of illustration, two or three figures bearing on the point. The county of Glamorgan, by far the most populous county in Wales, has a population of 687,000. At the present moment the total income arising from the ecclesiastical property situated in the county of Glamorgan, and applied to ecclesiastical purposes there, is £26,000. The county of Monmouth, which is the next most populous county, has a population of 252,000.

*SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: Are you dealing with tithe only?

MR. ASQUITH: I am not dealing with tithe only, but with tithe and rents, which may be treated with tithe.

*SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: And glebe?

MR. ASQUITH: No; not glebe—rents and tithes. The right hon. Gentleman will see that the balance which is not tithe is really very small. If I confined myself to tithes alone I believe the figures would bring in proportion about the same result. These figures are founded on a return moved by the hon. Member for Merthyr at the end of last Session. Well, the county of Monmouth has a population of 252,000, and an ecclesiastical income of £27,000. The county of Denbigh, with a population of 117,000, has an ecclesiastical income of £25,000; and the county of Pembroke, with a population of 89,000, has an ecclesiastical income of £25,000. So you have four counties, ranging in population from 687,000 to 89,000, each of which yields practically the same ecclesiastical revenue. I cannot think it would give satisfaction to the people of Wales if you were to ignore the sources from which this property is derived, and to give to the counties of Glamorgan and Monmouth—the two most populous and certainly the two richest counties—not what they at present enjoy, not an equivalent to the burden under which they at present lie, for ecclesiastical purposes, but a sum proportionate to their population. The result would be that these two counties, having a population of 940,000 out of the total population of Wales and Monmouthshire of 1,750,000, would get more than one-half of the ecclesiastical revenue of the Principality, although now they only derive one-fourth or one-fifth. We do not believe that principle would give satisfaction in its application. The anomalies—no doubt considerable if you look upon population as a test—arise from the fact that tithe is not a burden upon all kinds of property, but a burden on agricultural land; and those counties of Glamorgan and Monmouth, which, although not originally rich, after the discovery of minerals, developed a large industry and became a very flourishing community, have never contributed to the Church in anything like the proportion that the poor counties have. Sir, we therefore propose to adhere, notwithstanding the apparent anomalies—taking population as the only test—to that principle of distribution, and each County Council will be empowered to appropriate locally the tithe arising within that county. But I wish to point out that these will not prevent in the least two or more counties from joining together to make joint schemes for joint purposes, nor would it prevent the whole of the counties of Wales, if so minded, from making common contribution out of the revenue received by them to central purposes in which the whole of the Principality is interested.

MR. D. A. THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil): Would not the counties necessarily give back the tithes to the parishes from which they are derived?

MR. ASQUITH: I am coming to the question of the parishes. I have been dealing with the counties so far. Now I come to the parishes within the counties. A close examination of the figures as regards the interests of the various parishes no doubt does show that if you adopted a cast-iron rule and compelled the whole of the tithe arising within the parish to be applied to the purposes of that parish, and that alone, you would have an absurd state of things, which would lead to great waste and invidious and unneccessary distinctions. We, therefore, propose that, while the Commissioners and County Councils are to have a free hand, they are to have regard to the wants, circumstances, income, and so forth of each parish, and in making their scheme they are to take all these matters into account and do justice, as far as justice needs to be done, to parochial interests in the distribution of the funds. But we do not propose to bind them down by a rigid rule in that respect, but simply to indicate certain considerations which should be attended to. The only thing that remains is the question of the ultimate application under these schemes of the funds which will be set free. Perhaps the House will allow me simply to read the list of the purposes which are enumerated in the first schedule of the Bill. They are—

> "The erection or support of cottage or other hospitals or dispensaries and convalescent homes; the provision of trained nurses for the sick poor; the foundation and maintenance of public, parish, or district halls, institutes and libraries; the provision of labourers' dwellings, to be let at reasonable rents, and allotments [*Opposition laughter*]; technical and higher education, including the establishment and maintenance of libraries and museums and galleries of art of local or general utility [*renewed Opposition laughter*], for which provision is not made by Statute."

I observe that that enumeration excites the hilarity of some hon. Gentlemen opposite. I confess I should have been better prepared for some expression on their part of the sentiment of indignation at this sacrilegious misappropriation of ecclesiastical funds for secular purposes. But they prefer—at all events, one hon. Gentleman prefers—to treat it as a laughing matter. So far as we are concerned, although we may be charged, and shall, I have no doubt, be charged with the secularisation of religious funds, we believe that the purposes, a list of which I have just read, are in a large, and yet perfectly legitimate sense of the word, religious purposes, and we do not consider that it is any profanation of property dedicated to pious uses that it should be applied to the relief of suffering [*Opposition cries of* "Museums," "Art."], yes, and even in providing and bringing home to the common people, at least, the means of access to refining and humanising influences. That is the spirit in which this Bill has been framed. I submit it now to the consideration of the House, and I am certain that, whatever criticisms may be passed, either upon its main principles or upon its particular details, it has been conceived with an honest desire on the one hand to meet and satisfy what we believe to be the genuine demand of the vast majority of the people of Wales, and, on the other hand, to satisfy that demand with the smallest amount of hardship and with the least possible amount of detriment to those spiritual interests of which the Church will continue to be the guardian. Sir, I beg to ask leave to introduce this Bill.

*SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH (Bristol, W.): I do not think the House of Commons was ever invited to consider the principal legislative proposal of a Government—with a whole Session before it—under more singular circumstances than at the present moment. We have had a proposal made to us which all Members of the House will admit to be of first-rate importance, teeming with issues of the greatest magnitude. We have had it explained to the House in a speech of 20 minutes—an admirable speech, as all his speeches are—by the Home Secretary, without one single word as to the policy upon which this measure is founded. What is his reason? It is that he desires to check what he is pleased to call the growing abuse of lengthened debate on the introduction of important Government Bills. [*Ministerial cheers.*] Sir, I have sat in the House a great deal longer than the right hon. Gentleman, and a great deal longer than the hon. Members who cheered his statement, and I will venture to say it has always been the practice in this House—and was remarkably so when the right hon, Gentleman the Member for Midlothian was Prime Minister—that not only were the principal Government Bills introduced with a full defence of their policy from the Minister who introduced them, but ample opportunity was given for debate on the speech of the Minister afterwards. The right hon. Gentleman has himself admitted that the right hon. Member for Midlothian explained and recommended to the House the policy of the Government of the day with reference to the Irish Church in a speech of three hours' duration; and that, Sir, was after debates of days and weeks upon the Resolutions which were proposed to the previous Parliament by the right hon. Gentleman himself with reference to the same subject. The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, if he will not condescend to defend his policy here, says a good deal about it in the country. I have paid considerable attention to the speeches of the right hon. Gentleman, and I will presently trouble the House with a few remarkable quotations from them. I think he might have made some, at least, of those statements here to-night. But he appears in this matter to treat his opponents with singular contempt. I do not know, however, that that is the real reason of his silence on those points. I believe that at the bottom of the right hon. Gentleman's mind, and at the bottom of the mind of every hon. Member of this House, whatever his opinions upon the principles of this Bill may be, there is this feeling—that the country knows and recognises to the full the unreality of the proceedings in which we are engaged to-night. Such a feeling might have been due, when this Measure was before the House in 1893 and 1894, to the fact that it occupied such a place in the Government Programme that it was perfectly obvious to anyone who had the slightest Parliamentary experience that that would be the only occasion on which, during those Sessions, it would occupy our time. But that is not the case now. The measure now occupies the first place in the Government Programme. It is perfectly certain that for a considerable period of this Session it must occupy the close attention of the House. But we are oppressed by the casual phrases of the Prime Minister. He has told us, speaking on behalf of the Government of which he is the head, that there is no earthly prospect of this Bill becoming law. The labour to which we are condemned by the Government can only be compared with that labour which, in the ancient fable, was the symbol of useless toil. We are condemned by them—and their policy has been sanctioned by a small majority in this House—to pass the present Session in a new species of penal servitude, in discussing, debating, and voting upon this and other measures which they know, and say themselves, cannot by any earthly possibility pass into law. That, Sir, is why I believe the right hon. Gentleman has detained the House for no more than 20 minutes in the introduction of this most important Bill in the Programme of Her Majesty's Government. Now I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that we do not intend to follow his example.

We are opposed to the principles of Disestablishment and Disendowment which are embodied in this Bill, and we intend to state on every reasonable and Parliamentary occasion our reasons for that opposition. We intend to criticise his measure to the full, as such a measure requires Parliamentary criticism; and we shall not shrink from a laborious and a not very pleasant task on account of the unreality of our proceedings. Before I touch on the measure itself, which the right hon. Gentleman has asked leave to introduce, I should like to draw attention to a certain alteration in the attitude of the right hon. Gentleman himself towards this matter. When he first took charge of this question, in 1893, he treated us much as he has treated us to-night. He described those who did not agree with the principles he laid down as "belated controversialists," and he told us our opinions were "only fit to be preserved in a museum of political antiquities." I suppose it was in pity for our stupidity that he unbent a little in 1893. [Several hon. MEMBERS: "1894."] Yes, in 1894. He did not even then enter into arguments, but favoured us in his most dogmatic and didactic style, with certain bald assertions upon the subject of the Church in Wales which I think he must have culled from the publications of the Liberation Society. But during the last six or eight months, in his speeches in the country, he has adopted a different line altogether, and he has posed, forsooth, as a friend of the Welsh Church. He has been good enough to express his belief that in the policy he has put before us to-night—

> "he is doing nothing injurious to the interests either of the Church or of religion, but that, on the contrary, he is promoting the best interests of both."

He has claimed—

> "that he and the Party by whom he is supported are prosecuting absolutely disinterested ends."

He has admitted that—

> "so far as the Welsh people are concerned, and still more so far as Englishmen and Scotchmen are concerned, it is perfectly true that we shall not be one penny the better when the Welsh Church is disestablished."

But he—

> "disdains to put, and never will put, the cause of Welsh Disestablishment upon the low, sordid footing that it will materially benefit the Welsh people."

On the contrary—

> "he feels indignant and almost ashamed that a great cause of this kind, affecting deeply as it does the most cherished traditions, aye, and the loftiest and purest feelings, of the Welsh people, should be reduced to the level of a question of pounds, shillings, and pence."

He claims—

> "to be engaged in a high and sacred task in redeeming the cause of religion and of the Church itself from the obstacles and embarrassments which, in the eyes of the Welsh people, impede and discredit it,"

And this evening he has supplemented these declarations by assuring us that in his mind he is about to devote the funds of the despoiled Church to religious purposes. No doubt the Chancellor of the Exchequer eminently approves of the declarations of his colleague. I dare say that those sentiments which I have just read may appear noble and beautiful to the last degree to Her Majesty's Government and to hon. Members who sit behind them: but I should like to ask the Home Secretary to put himself in the place of those millions of Englishmen and women who believe that Disestablishment is a wrong to the State, and that Disendowment is a wicked plunder of the Church. Let him think whether they must not feel that insult is added to injury, when such words as I have read are used of a policy forced upon Her Majesty's Government by their supporters in Wales, by those who never say a word or do an action with regard to the Church which does not show hostility and hatred to her. [*Cheers and Ministerial cries of* "Oh!"] I speak of the main promoters of the agitation against the Church. I ask the right hon. Gentleman, if he could put himself in the place of those who entertain the feeling to which I have alluded, whether he would not regard, as we regard, such language of his as I have quoted as sheer political cant, and cant of the most nauseous kind? Sir, I infinitely prefer the earlier manner of the right hon. Gentleman. Let him tell us boldly, as he told us in 1893, that this measure is based simply on the fact that 31 out of the 34 Members for Wales are in favour of it. But I turn to some of the statements that the right hon. Gentleman adopted in his speech last year with regard to the Church in Wales. He said that she is an alien Church, and that

> "she is associated in the minds of the people with humiliating memories."

I have studied very carefully the speeches of hon. Members from Wales, in order, if I could, to ascertain of what these humiliating memories consist. I could understand humiliating memories with regard to the Welsh Church in the minds of Englishmen on account of the atrocious conduct—I can use no other epithet—of the State to the Church in Wales during the 17th and 18th centuries; but I cannot understand how Welshmen can have such memories in relation to her. If an alien Church means a Church imposed by the will of a stranger upon a conquered people, I think Welshmen should be proud rather than humiliated to remember that it is an absolute historical untruth to say the Welsh Church is an alien Church. The Church in Wales existed in the sixth century, when England was heathen. The four dioceses in Wales existed for centuries before they accepted the supremacy of Canterbury, and whatever may have been the position of the Church in Wales under the Plantagenet Kings, it is certain that in the Tudor and Stuart period she was eminently national, so much so that it was mainly due to her that the Welsh language has been preserved. I could quote the right hon. Member for Denbighshire to show that if there is anything in Wales in religion that is foreign and alien it is not the Church, but it is Nonconformity.

*SIR G. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire): I have never said that; I have over and over again corrected the statement. I have never said that Nonconformity was a foreign growth in Wales. What I did say was that it was a modern growth 25 years ago. The right hon. Gentleman no doubt quotes from a misreport which I never corrected in "Hansard," but the context shews that I used the word "modern."

*SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH: If the right hon. Gentleman had said it was a foreign growth I think he would have spoken the truth. But I do not wish to attribute to him any more than he did say. What he did say was that it was a modern growth, and that 150 years ago it did not exist. What I think is meant by calling the Church in Wales an alien Church is this—that people think of the present and not of the past. They find, as is no doubt the case, that in the Welsh-speaking population the Church is in a minority, possibly a small minority, and that Nonconformity is in a large majority. But in Wales do you not count as Welshmen any but those who speak the Welsh language? ["Hear, hear!"] An hon. Member cheers that statement. Would any Irishman or Scotchman decline to count as Irishmen or Scotchmen any except those who spoke Gaelic or the ancient Irish? The proposition is absurd. When speaking of the inhabitants of Wales we mean all Welshmen, whatever language they speak; and I say if you take Wales as a whole it is not true that the Church is in a small minority. In the large towns it is admitted that she is a strong and a growing force. In the country districts no doubt it is the fact that she does not occupy perhaps the same position. But why? Not because she ever ceased to be a national Church—not because, as in England, those who left her in the bad times of the last century differed from her in ritual or doctrine. No. But because of the neglect and abuses for which the State, and not the Church, is responsible. And now, when we see what she is admitted to have done in the larger populations; now that she is notoriously doing her very best in these rural districts to redeem the past; now that there is every reason to anticipate that she will turn what may, no doubt, be a minority as compared with all those who belong to other religious bodies—into a majority—is this the time to deprive her of her position and emoluments? I do not wish to dwell upon this question of the comparative numbers of the Church in Wales. I do not think it is conclusive either way in regard to this matter. But I will say this—that it does not lie with hon. Members below the Gangway to talk of the Church as in a small minority in Wales unless they are first prepared to take that test of the number of her members to which we have repeatedly challenged them, and which in all fairness ought to have been carried out before the introduction of this measure. If we say that the Church is living and growing in Wales; if we say that within a period, that will be short indeed as compared with the life of a Church or a nation, she will have a number of members in that part of the country which certainly will no more justify her Disestablishment and Disendowment than would the existing number of members of the Church in England justify Disestablishment and Disendowment here—if we say these things, what are we told by the Home Secretary? We are told that the Church is regarded by the bulk of the people as an aggressive sectarian power, a symbol of national discord, a source of embitterment and animosity. How can a Church help being aggressive if she is living and growing? She must be aggressive upon sin and unbelief. But where is the embitterment and animosity? Is the embitterment and animosity with the members of the Church? No; it is with those who attack her. Why are they embittered against her? I used last year, I think, the words "envy and jealousy," and the hon. Member for Carnarvon Boroughs rebuked me for applying such words to his country. I will not apply such words now. I will make this simple statement—that the Nonconformists in Wales appear to be embittered against the Church, because, exercising their religious freedom, they decline to be members of that Church, and because they are not members object to her being established. Again, they object to the Church possessing her Endowments because, though it would be perfectly open to them to have the benefit of these Endowments if they agreed with her, they prefer not to agree with her, and therefore they say that these Endowments must be taken away from her and devoted to some other purpose in which they may share. I will not use the words "envy and jealousy"; but how are you to describe the sensations which I have endeavoured to put before you? That is the reason of the embitterment and animosity on their side. But now I want to put this before hon. Members. Is the right hon. Gentleman so absolutely sure that, if the Church in Wales were disestablished and disendowed, embitterment and animosity on the part of the Nonconformists towards her members would cease? Is it not really a social grievance? Is this not really the fact—that the Church in Wales, as she is in the United States, as she is in the Colonies, where she is neither established nor endowed, is the Church which is most attractive to the wealthier and more educated classes, and that for this reason there is a feeling of embitterment and animosity among certain persons against her? I remember a very curious example of this social grievance being put before the House some years ago on this subject, by the hon. Member for South Glamorganshire. He drew a very painful picture. He said—

> "Here is a farmer with three sons; they all wish to undertake religious work. One becomes a Baptist minister, one becomes a Congregationalist minister, and one becomes a clergyman of the Church of England. The squire invites the clergyman of the Church of England to dinner; he will not invite the Congregationalist and the Baptist."

That was the terrible social grievance which the hon. Member for South Glamorganshire seriously urged as a reason for Disestablishment and Disendowment. Just as if the squire of the parish would not always, if he wanted clerical society at all, be likely to prefer the society of the clergyman of his own Church to the society of ministers of other denominations! [*Cries of* "Why?"] Because he agrees with him. But there is a more serious matter. It has often been alleged that farms are let, and custom is given to farmers and tradesmen in Wales, because they are Churchmen, in preference to others who are Nonconformists. ["Hear, hear."] Hon. Gentlemen cheer that. I confess I do not believe it. I do not believe it has ever been proved, But, assuming it to be true now, it would be ten times more true if by Disestablishment and Disendowment you compelled Churchmen to band themselves together as Nonconformists have often banded themselves together, for mutual assistance and support in the maintenance of their Church, instead of leaving them in the position which they occupy now. I do not believe that hon. Members opposite who are in favour of this policy have really considered what a powerful social and political force a Disestablished, and even a Disendowed Church might become. Can they suppose that Churchmen, so banded together, who after all are human, will be able to forget—assuming this measure to become law—that their Church has been degraded and despoiled through the action of their Nonconformist neighbour; and can they find in such a state of things any chance of a cessation of embitterment and animosity? I know it is said by many that because the Church is established she is privileged. I never could see why it should be called a privilege to the Church to be to a certain extent controlled and limited in her action by the State. Is she privileged because, in common with other religious bodies, she is protected by law in the possession of Endowments which were given to her by private persons long before any other religious body in this country was endowed at all. It is true that they were given long ago. I should have thought that if there is any argument to be made on this, it is not that which I rather understood the Home Secretary to suggest last year, that the Church had had her Endowments long enough, and that, therefore, they ought to be devoted to some other purposes; but that centuries of possession and enjoyment, centuries during the main part of which—certainly during our present time—these Endowments have been used for the best purposes for which money can be used, ought to be the best title that the Church could possess. I really do not want to dwell upon this side of the question, because I feel in addressing hon. Members opposite upon it that they and I do not regard it from the same standpoint. We do not occupy the same ground. We cannot meet in argument when we so absolutely differ in principle. To them I dare say it is the ideal of a State that the State should be neutral to all religions alike if not rather unfriendly towards them. To me a State is without some of the best and most important parts of Government if it is without the recognition of religion which is implied in the fact of an Established Church. They consider that Establishment does harm to a Church. I believe that Establishment is an infinitely better security for religious freedom than the narrow limits of any trust deed. They think that Parliament has not only the power, but morally the right, to take the Endowments of the Church and to apply them to any other purpose it likes. I believe that any such action is a moral wrong. We are as wide apart as the poles asunder, and though it is necessary and right for us to put our opinions upon this subject before the country, yet I prefer now to invite hon. Members to consider whether, assuming these principles of Disestablishment and Disendowment which they hold are right, anything that has ever happened in the history of any country affords a precedent for the manner in which those principles are to be carried out under this Bill. I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade is in his place, but he made a very able speech on the introduction of the Bill into the House of Commons last Session, in which I noticed two statements. He said:—

> "There is not a Roman Catholic country in Europe in which Church property has not been taken by the State on the ground of common utility."

Well, that is true; but it is not the whole truth. Take the case of Italy. The relations in Italy between the State and the Church are, and have been all along, so exceptional and so unique that I do not think any argument whatever can be drawn from anything done in that country. But even in Italy the Church at the present time is in possession of many of her endowments. Let me refer to France, Spain, and Belgium. It is true that in France and Spain, and I believe in Belgium, the property of monasteries, convents, and colleges has been absolutely confiscated by the State; but we are not dealing with monasteries, convents, and colleges, but with the property of what I may call the working part of the Church—the Bishops and clergy—and therefore it is only in regard to them that any argument can apply. What has happened in Spain with regard to the property of the Bishops and clergy? In Spain, I believe, the State took that property, but its value was handed over to the Bishops and clergy in Government stock. In France and Belgium the Government took that property, but instead of it a considerable sum is annually given, France granting about 1¾ millions through the Legislature for the purposes of public worship in the country, and therefore in not one of these cases has anything been done which affords a precedent for the proposal in this Bill, which is absolutely to deprive the Church of her Endowments without any compensation whatever. But the right hon. Gentleman asserted that something had been done nearer home, in England itself, which would justify it. He said that the property of the Church here has been frequently used and disposed of by the nation by being transferred at the Reformation from those who held one set of doctrines to those who held another. What the right hon. Gentleman must have meant by that is this——

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. J. BRYCE, Aberdeen, S.): I explained it much more fully than that, which is a very abbreviated statement.

SIR M. HICKS-BEACH: I took it from the fullest report I could find. What the right hon. Gentleman must have meant was this—that the property which had belonged to the Roman Catholic Church before the Reformation was at the Reformation handed over to the Protestant Church. He did not venture to assert that the Church before the Reformation was endowed by the State, and none but an ignorant person would assert it. I think last year one hon. Member for Wales actually had the hardihood to repeat to this House the old fable about the ancient king who, in expiation of a murder he had committed directed that one-tenth of the land should be made over to the Church. It is perfectly clear that the property of the Church in England and in Wales is property which has been given by individuals to local ecclesiastical corporations, as the right hon. Gentleman said last year, and originally consisted of private Endowments. But as to the assertion of the President of the Board of Trade, I would not set my view of history against so high an authority as his. I will, however, maintain that no such transfer as he suggested ever did take place in England, and I will quote against him authorities which even he will recognise. What does Professor Freeman say? He says:—

> "It is certain that no English ruler or English Parliament ever thought of setting up a new Church, but simply of reforming the existing Church. The facts of history compel us to assume the absolute identity of the Church after the Reformation with the Church of England before the Reformation."

What does another authority state?—

> "I can find no trace of that opinion which is now common in the minds of unthinking persons that the Roman Catholic Church was established in England at the period of the Reformation and that the Protestant Church was put in its place, nor does there appear to have been so much as a doubt in the minds of any of the reformers whether the Church legally established in England after the Reformation was the same institution as the Church legally established in England before the Reformation."

These are the words of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone). If the Roman Catholic Church before the Reformation had been despoiled as the right hon. Gentleman erroneously supposes, you may be quite sure that the Roman Catholics of the present day would not have forgotten it. What did the Roman Catholic Bishops of Great Britain say in 1826? In the most solemn way they disclaimed on behalf of themselves and their co-religionists in this country any right or pretension on the part of British Catholics to the revenues or temporalities of the Established Church; and declared that they regarded these revenues as the property of the body in which they were now vested by law. I think I have established the falsity of the erroneous supposition of the President of the Board of Trade. I think I have shown that, as he did not venture to affirm that the original Endowments of the Church were anything but private Endowments, they remain private Endowments still, and did not become State Endowments by anything that was done at the time of the Reformation. But I know that the great precedent which the right hon. Gentleman himself considers establishes his case with regard to this Bill is the precedent of the Irish Church Act. Now, I think I can prove, though I will not attempt to go into it at length on the present occasion, that the Irish Church Act is really no precedent at all. The circumstances of the Irish Church were, unfortunately, in the year 1869 absolutely different from that living and growing condition in which the Church is now in Wales. The Endowments of the Church in Ireland were, to a large extent, Parliamentary Endowments taken from the majority of the population and given to the creed of a small minority as part of the English settlement in Ireland. Nothing of the sort ever happened to the National Church in Wales. Endowments of the Church in Wales have never belonged to anybody but the Church to which they were originally given. But if the circumstances are different, so is the action proposed. When the Church of Ireland was disestablished it was solemnly asserted at the time, by those who were responsible for that step on the part of Parliament, that it was no precedent whatever for any similar operation in Great Britain; but, assuming it to be taken as a precedent, yet the Church in Ireland was disestablished as a whole, and now you propose to disestablish the Church in England piecemeal. I think if Her Majesty's Government felt it incumbent upon them to disestablish four dioceses of the English Church, for that is what they propose, they were bound to use every means in their power to secure the maintenance of spiritual and ecclesiastical unity in that Church after the operation of Disestablishment. But what have they done? They have done nothing of the kind. They have simply cut off these four dioceses, and have left the maintenance of unity either among themselves or with the rest of the Church of England purely to the chance of voluntary action; and they have inserted provisions in their Bill which will certainly be likely to prevent any such voluntary action being taken at all. Now, let me give one example. In dealing with the question of vested interests last year, the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary very properly, as I thought, said that any vested interest must be subject to the performance of the duty to which the person possessing such interest was bound, and to the laws of the religious body to which he belonged. The clergymen of no Church in the world would be so independent as an incumbent in Wales possessing a life interest would be if this Bill passed into law. Suppose any such person did not perform the duties of his office; or suppose he required correction in matters of doctrine or ritual, who is to correct him? The Commissioners from whom he derives his income? Why, the Commissioners may be of any or no religion at all! Is the Bishop to correct him? Why, you deprive him of all means of enforcing his spiritual authority. The hon. right Gentleman has professed his desire to provide for the future welfare of the Church in Wales. Does he think he provides for that by establishing a state of ecclesiastical anarchy? He says he desires to place the Church on an equal footing with other religious denominations in that country. Does he not know—he knows very well—that the most important religious denominations of the Nonconformists, like the Wesleyans and Congregationalists, are not only well endowed, but well organised, and in close union with their co-religionists in England? How is he to place the Church in a position of equality if he deprives the four dioceses of their existing organisation, and puts nothing in its place, and takes such steps as seem calculated to assure that the Church shall never have a fresh organisation at all? I have referred to the precedent of the Church of Ireland, which, it is often said, has become more vigorous after Disestablishment. Well, that may be so. I do not want to enter into that argument now. Assuming it to be true, what is the fact? Why, provision was made for the Church of Ireland so that it was possible for her to become more vigorous. I will assert that those who know Ireland best will agree that, if the Church of Ireland had been dealt with in the way proposed with regard to the Church in Wales, it would have been absolutely impossible for her to have attained her present position. The Member for Midlothian brought forward as an essential part of his Irish Church Act, provisions for facilitating the reorganisation of the Church after Disestablishment by giving great inducements to those persons who possessed vested interests to commute and compound those interests for the benefit of the new Church body. That was done, greatly to the credit of those individuals and the good of their country. What was the result? The new Church body was founded under most favourable auspices. The right hon. Gentleman, in his scheme, debars those entitled to life interests as existing incumbents of the Church in Wales from doing anything of the kind. He says the Government have no disposition to do anything of the sort. That is unjust to the Church in Wales. It is worse—it is unwise. If the Government were wise, they would have followed the example of the Member for Midlothian in being generous to the disestablished and disendowed Church. The right hon. Gentleman, I know, holds strong objections to a central fund, and he stated those objections to the House. He has practically asserted that he declines to consider any idea of the sort. What is his argument against obstacle to a central fund? Why, it is this. He told us last year, and, although not in the same words, he repeated the statement to-night, that the fund will be squandered and wasted if dealt with in that way, and that 25 years after Disendowment in Ireland there is practically none of the capital available for any purpose whatever: He is absolutely wrong. A certain part of the funds of the Irish Church are gone. There was a section in the Irish Act which provided that regard should be had to unavoidable calamity and suffering, and large sums amounting to £2,250,000 were in consequence granted to the relief of distress, the payment of tenants' arrears, and other matters of that kind. It may be true that is gone, but there is no reason why a similar course should be taken with regard to the Church in Wales. What was done with the rest of the funds of the Church of Ireland? £1,150,000 was given to the Congested Districts Board and £250,000 to promote sea fisheries. In both these cases the capital is not wasted. It remains; it is reproductive. Again, £1,000,000 was given to intermediate education; £1,300,000 in pensions to national school teachers; and £20,000 a year to the Royal University. In every one of these cases the capital still remains absolutely intact; only the annual income is devoted to the purposes I have named. Therefore the view the right hon. Gentleman has taken, that he could not adopt the scheme of the Irish Church Act without losing the capital sum, is absolutely without foundation; and I venture to say that under a scheme of a central fund the capital sum would be safer than if it were devoted to those parochial and local purposes which are so dear to him. I do not ask him to accept all the details of the Irish Act. I only ask him to consider the principle. He alluded to the inequalities which would arise in the distribution of the funds if they were allocated in any other way than that which he proposes. I think the Leader of the Opposition showed amply last year how utterly absurd was the allocation then proposed. Not a penny would be available in any parish under the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman so long as the existing incumbent lives. In the next parish there may be a death, and the parish will have the funds at its disposal. The tithe will go into the hands of the County Council. But it will fall in, not as a whole, but parish by parish. How is it possible for a County Council to frame a scheme dealing with tithes parish by parish except for the benefit of each parish alone. He has told us that counties may join, and even parts of Wales may join. Is it likely they will join? Do not we know that this is a bribe to the local ratepayers? Do not we know that it is an appeal to the greed of the local ratepayers? Of this I am quite certain—that if it be the mind of the House to Disendow the Church in Wales in this fashion, most of the funds will go to those parishes which want them least, to the relief of the payers of local rates, and also of the landlord, and not, as in Ireland, to the benefit of the country at large. I know the right hon. Gentleman holds strong opinions on this matter. I am afraid these opinions are coloured by his desire not to give as good terms to the Church in Wales as were given in Ireland. In other respects he treats the Church in Wales worse than the Irish Church was treated. I should like to know why he has assumed it is a proposal so obvious that it is one to which no objection can be raised, that the churchyards in Wales are not to be dealt with as the churchyards in Ireland were dealt with—that they are to be handed over to the Parish Council, instead of, as in Ireland, being handed over to the Church, except where the churchyard is separated from the edifice by a highway. I dare say the arbitrations were too favourable to the owners of advowsons in Ireland; but is that a reason for awarding such scant justice to the owners of advowsons in Wales as giving to them, as a maximum, no more than one year's purchase, when it is notorious that some of those advowsons have been bought from the Government itself, and many of them purchased at prices far beyond the value which the right hon. Gentleman names as his maximum? I now come to the case of the curates. It may have been the case—and the right hon. Gentleman appeared to put it strongly—that in Ireland curates were ordained in order that they might receive compensation. Assuming that to have been the case, would it not have been a wiser course for the right hon. Gentleman to have inserted in his Bill provisions which would have prevented any abuse of that kind, instead of refusing compensation to curates altogether? Curates in Wales have been obliged to spend time and money upon a costly education; they have been ordained as Welsh-speaking curates specially for the service of the Church in Wales; and through their speaking Welsh many of them will be deprived of opportunities of employment or advancement in England. Does the right hon. Gentleman think as many curates will be employed in Wales after the passing of this Bill as there are now? There are some gentlemen who hold that, after all, the funds of the Church in Wales yield so small an annual income that but a short time will elapse before Disendowment is more than compensated for by the voluntary contributions of Churchmen in Wales or in England; and for that reason, forsooth, it has been actually argued that it is a moral and a proper process to take away funds from a corporation because it is likely to be endowed again! It appears to me that the spoliation of old Endowments is not the best way to encourage new ones; and if one Government can propose the date of 1703—a purely arbitrary date—as the date before which nothing shall be considered as a private Endowment, some Government 50 years hence may propose a date much nearer to the present time. But, assuming the funds of the disendowed Church in Wales are supplemented by voluntary effort, as it is anticipated they will be, will not the very institutions which it is desired to help by the allocation of Church funds be deprived, through the Disendowment of the Church, of the help which they now enjoy? I dare say there may not be in Wales as many hospitals, dispensaries, convalescent homes, or nursing funds as we should desire to see; but what there are, I venture to say, are largely maintained by the subscriptions and donations of Churchmen; and does it not stand to reason that if you compel Churchmen to maintain their Church, which is now maintained by old Endowments, you must necessarily deprive those institutions at any rate of some of the subscriptions which they now enjoy? What good will you do by taking those Church endowments and handing them over to cottage hospitals and so on, on the one hand; and, on the other, transferring the voluntary offerings of Churchmen to the Church? I do not think it will benefit the ratepayers if many schools that are now maintained as voluntary schools, without being a burden upon the rates, are thrown upon the rates, although they may be relieved, at the cost of Church funds, from their present liability to provide parish rooms and allotments. The right hon. Gentleman told us that nobody in Wales will be a penny the better materially for this Bill; but will nobody be any the worse? I can understand a secularist, who hates all religion, approving of this Bill, as a step towards the suppression of religion; but I cannot understand a Christian Nonconformist, who knows the benefit of endowments for his own denomination, who must admit it is impossible for the ministers of his own denomination to supply all the needs of the people of our remote rural districts or the thousands in our large towns—I cannot understand how such a man can desire to deprive the Church in Wales of its modest means—not exceeding the sum which is annually spent by this House upon the British Museum, through which she is enabled to preach those great truths of Christianity, on which all Christian sects are agreed, in the dark places of the world where but for her they would not be preached at all. I cannot understand how any Christian can be in favour of depriving the Church of the means of going on with this teaching, which was never more required in the history of the country and never more zealously given than it is now, and devoting those means to no better purpose than the endowment of a museum. I have not dealt with this question as a question affecting England; but it must be so dealt with on some occasion. It is a blow aimed not merely at Wales; it is a blow which is intended, if not by the Government, at any rate by their supporters, to have an ulterior effect on England. I notice that throughout this controversy the right hon. Gentleman has taken as much care to keep entirely in the background the case of the Church of England and the mode in which the Church of England will be affected by this Bill, as if Wales were a separate country situated on the other side of the globe. The English people in everything are slow to move, but I think they are beginning to move upon this great question. We know that with them, whatever the proceedings of this House, must rest the ultimate decision; and I am convinced that, when once they realise the injustice and wrong that are proposed to be done by this Bill to a poor but living part of their Church, they will visit the Bill and its authors with the condemnation they deserve.

*MR. F. EDWARDS (Radnorshire) said that the right hon. Gentleman had charged the Welsh supporters of the Bill with hostility to the Church; but he was a Churchman himself, and he was not acting in a hostile manner to the Church; indeed he considered it to be for the good of the Church that she should be freed from State trammels. The right hon. Gentleman repudiated the idea that the Church was an alien Church in Wales; and on this point he should like to quote the language of a Welsh clergyman, the Rev. T. Edwin Jones, vicar of St. Mary's, Bangor. This gentleman said:—

> "Where is the ancient British Church, I should like to know? There was once an ancient British Church. If the present Church be a distinct Church, as the ancient British Church was, we can deal with it separately from any other Church. If it be not, if it be one and the same as the English Church, that is why it has come to be looked on as an alien Church. The truth is, the ancient British Church died long ago, and was decently buried in the Welsh cathedrals; and the inscription on his tomb may be written from a verse in the *Diocesan Calendar*—'All the cathedral services are in English.' The dignitaries of the Church have the hands of Esau, it is true; but they speak with the voice of Jacob, and they are so wedded to English sentiments and customs that Welshmen have come to look upon them and their Church as aliens."

["Oh, oh."] Well that is the language of a Church clergyman, and hon. Members must settle the matter with him. Then it was said foreign missions would suffer if the Church was disendowed. But the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists had been carrying on foreign missions for 20 years; and while the sum collected for Church purposes at home was increased last year by 88 per cent., the contributions to foreign missions was increased by 94 per cent. He was glad the Bill would contain the provisions of the Bill of last year as to the allocation of the tithes. The Leader of the Opposition spoke of it last year as being intolerable, and not to be justified on any general principle. Hon. Members opposite asked that they should be regarded as the peculiar guardians of the interests of the rural districts; and yet the provision of the Bill which secured what was their own to these rural districts was denounced as intolerable. If it was proper that the tithes of a parish should be devoted to the spiritual purposes of a parish, it was equally right that they should be devoted to parochial purposes under Disestablishment. Any other course would operate very hardly in the county he represented. Radnorshire was small in area and population; it had no manufactures; and the tithes were small, about £4,000 a year. Glamorganshire was large in area and population; it possessed minerals, railways and docks; its rateable value was 20 times that of Radnorshire; its tithes were £11,000 a year; and yet it was suggested that the Bill ought to embody a scheme under which Radnorshire, which needed all its tithes, would give some part of them to Glamorganshire, which did not need them so much. It was very clear that the Church in Wales only ministered to the minority. If hon. Gentlemen would not take that from him he would give them his authority. Canon Howell, in 1890, said:—

> "There is the unquestionable fact that the majority of the people are no longer within the fold of the Church. There is the equally unquestionable fact that her adherents are largely made up of English settlers and Anglicised Welshmen, not of the Welsh-speaking masses who mainly hold the future of the Principality in their hands."

The people of Wales ardently desired Disestablishment and Disendowment. Some interesting inquiries had lately been made on behalf of *The Record*, to English Clergymen. One answer was that the origin of tithes was unknown. Yet it was claimed that they came from pious ancestors. What a lot of pious ancestors there must have been! They were not confined to the landowning class, for tithes were formerly laid upon personal earnings. The Statute 27, Henry VIII., c. 20, contained these words:—

> "Forasmuch as divers numbers of evil disposed persons inhabited in sundry countries, cities, towns, and places of this realm, have attempted to subtract and withhold in some places, the whole and in some places great parts of their tithes and oblations, as well personal as predial, due unto God and the Holy Church, and pursuing each their detestable enormities and injuries, have attempted in late time past to disobey, contemn, and despise the process, laws, and decrees of the Ecclesiastical Courts of this Realm."

And it was enacted that every subject of the Realm should yield and pay his tithes, &c., and if he refused he was to be—

> "committed to ward, there to remain without bail or mainprize."

That was a statement of fact that, in the time of Henry VIII., there was as much unwillingness to pay tithes as there was now. They knew that a great part of the tithe had come into existence since the time of Henry VIII., and they were asked to believe that the people of Wales had since that time changed their nature —that a sort of Ecclesiastical Millenium had sprung up, and that tithes were now paid willingly.

VISCOUNT WOLMER (Edinburgh, W.): Will the hon. Member give us an instance of tithe arising since the time of Henry VIII.?

*MR. EDWARDS said, that a great part of the land had come into cultivation since that time, and had so become titheable. In some cases it had been stated that the tithe was the only source of a Rector's income. After the Church had been established all these centuries, would it be believed that a Rector was to be found to deliberately write down that the tithe was the only source of his income? He did not think that that showed that the Church had a very strong hold upon the people. The same Gentleman who stated that, went on to say:—

> "The effect of Disestablishment would be to deprive the Church of the services of a resident Minister, as it would be beyond the power of the congregation to support their own clergyman, and to defray the current expenses of the Church."

In that parish there were 18 chapels, and yet they were asked to believe that, if the Church was disestablished, there would be no means of religious instruction. If the Nonconformists could support 18 chapels, he did not see why the Churchmen could not support the Church in the parish. The voluntary system had worked well in Wales, and was amply sufficient to provide religious institutions. Of course, a great deal might be said about the great progress made by the Church. He did not think the progress was as great as it should be, or as great as it would be after Disestablishment. In the towns the Church was making progress, but how? On the voluntary principle. In the country she was declining because she had to be supported by tithe. He referred more particularly to Radnorshire, where the Church was in a majority 30 years ago on the testimony of the late Mr. Henry Richard, but was now in a minority. He felt confident that, in supporting this Bill, he was doing nothing that would damage the Church. He felt that he had established that the voluntary system had worked well in Wales, as adopted by the Nonconformists, and that, as far as the Church had progressed, she had progressed by that very principle; and, in asking the House to Disestablish and Disendow the Church, they would be doing something which would be a gain, not only to the State, but even to the Church herself.

*COLONEL SIR EDWARD S. HILL (Bristol S.) desired to intervene in this Debate, and to say a few words not, because he was a Welshman, for he had not that honour, but as one who had lived nearly 40 years in Wales, mostly in the cathedral city of Llandaff, who had been intimately connected with the great port of Cardiff, and who, having been for many years in in the Commission of the Peace for the County of Glamorgan, and having served the office of Sheriff, might, perhaps, without presumption, lay claim to have some knowledge of that part of the principality. He had naturally watched with much attention the conduct and progress of the Church, of which he was an humble but devoted member. Yet was his devotion not of that partisan character which precluded admiration for, or appreciation of the good work done by other religious bodies, at a time when the fires of Christianity burned low, and the stirring of their embers was a vital necessity to their rekindling and the bursting forth of the flame which had since shone so brightly. He rejoiced to think that many of the most distinguished Dissenters—not political but religious Dissenters, entirely reciprocated this sentiment, and would deeply regret that any agency for the spiritual good of their fellow-countrymen should be hindered. He grieved to think they had seen the day when the Prime Minister of this Christian country should see fit to lift his hand to strike a deadly blow to that Christianity which had been its glory and its boast for so many centuries, and that for, as he should venture to show, no other valid reason except the necessity of conciliating a certain portion of his followers, and supporters of his Government. The Prime Minister recently visited Cardiff and delivered a long speech in which his attack on Christianity in his proposal to deprive the British Church in Wales of its property occupied a prominent place—that place in fact, which they had so often been told, that by justice and expediency, and every right belonged to Home Rule, but which, with the kind assent of hon. Gentlemen who usually sat below the Gangway on his left, the Government had been allowed to shelve—possibly for an indefinite period. Curiously enough the Prime Minister disclaimed any intention of attacking the Church. He said he only wished to remove it from a position of prominence; that was, to reduce it to poverty and then cast it adrift. He could not help asking himself,—Would his Lordship approve of such a method of improvement being applied to the House of Lords and to his own person? He could not help thinking his Lordship would call such a process by one word, and the only word which in his opinion was applicable to it, namely, Robbery. The Prime Minister gave two reasons for this proposed treatment of the Church in Wales. The first reason was, that it was an alien Church forced upon the Welsh nation; and the second, that it was effete and useless in its object;—"an alien Church that alienated everybody, a missionary Church that converted nobody." That, no doubt, was very smart, but his Lordship would forgive his saying it was wanting in that veracity which would give it point. "The Welsh nation," was an expression he often heard, but which failed to convey to his mind any definite idea. He was quite aware that within the geographical limits of the country now called Wales, and also outside of it, there existed the remains of the ancient race that once peopled this country, speaking a beautiful language of their own, with a history of which they might well be proud. But this race was so inextricably commingled with the other races with which Great Britain and Ireland were populated, that to talk of it as a nation to whom separate existence was possible, or in any way desirable, was to use a figure of speech which did not commend itself to his understanding. He sometimes heard the cry of "Wales for the Welch," and he had shuddered to think of the depopulation and devastation which would take place in the principality if this foolish cry could be carried out, and all the so-called aliens were to be sent away with their belongings. Aliens first developed the coal and iron of Wales; aliens first made the seaports and the railways connecting those seaports with the minerals; and aliens were now for the most part working the copper, steel, and tin; but there was one thing that aliens did not do for Wales and the Welsh—and which should be a source of pride and glory to the ancient race—aliens did not establish the Church. Christianity flourished in Wales long before St. Augustine, moved by the beauty of English boy captives in Rome, came over to convert them. Glamorganshire and Monmouthshire were full of relics of the ancient British Church, which was established in Wales by the Welsh, which some dared to call alien and in their rage would pull down. That Church, established without Rome, fell under the influence of Rome, and then regained her independence, but she had always been the same Church, and it ill became those whose existence began only some 150 years before, to dare to insult her venerable antiquity with the term "alien." As to the Prime Minister's second reason, that the Church was effete and useless, he would ask,—What was the condition of the Church in Wales? He would reply by quoting the words of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian, who, in 1891, said the Church in Wales was an advancing, an active, a living, and a rising Church. He would not enter into the question of the proportion which the Church bore to the population. That was a matter which could only be ascertained by counting, and to which process, for some reason, those who were opposed to the Church always offered the most strenuous opposition. But beyond all question the Church was by far the largest of all the religious bodies in Wales, and was daily increasing. Some people said dissent was decreasing. He did not think churchmen should rejoice at that. The field was so vast, the work so great, that there was ample room for all. The Prime Minister allowed himself to say—he hoped he did not mean to say it—that the Church in its present form could neither benefit the nation, the Church itself, nor even the cause of religion. Was his Lordship aware, and if not why was he not aware, that 1,488 clergymen were working in the four dioceses he would fain destroy? Did he know that the dioceses of London and Llandaff were, in the last return, bracketed as equal in the number of their churches built and restored? Did he know of the immense sums of money that had been spent? Why, something like £40,000 had been expended in the restoration of Llandaff Cathedral, and large congregations were to be seen there every Sunday. True, there was now no Welsh service. Why? For the same reason that it had been discontinued in the Wesleyan Chapel — because a Welsh congregation could not be obtained. It is difficult perhaps for hon. Members fully to appreciate the feeling of indignation with which those who have watched the restoration of this ancient Cathedral, stone by stone, and who may possibly have been privileged to assist in the work, view the proposal of Her Majesty's Government to hand it over to some new-fangled body as a "National Monument," in which, by their kind permission, the Church may hold Divine Services according to its rites. No one who knew the country could deny the efforts that the Church had of late years made to keep pace with the increasing population. Yet this was a Church which converted nobody. Would anyone who knew anything of education say that the Church was effete and useless when in the last eight years the attendance at Sunday School had increased something like 30 per cent.? He could easily weary the House with figures proving the vitality of the Church; but he thought he had said enough to prove that the Church deserved the encomiums of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian; and although this might be annoying to the Agnostic and the Atheist, it should be a matter of rejoicing to all true Christians. A third argument brought against the Church was that it was State-paid. The Prime Minister, in his speech at Cardiff, did not venture to state this in explicit terms, because he knew he could not substantiate such an assertion. But he adopted the old artifice of assuming the major premise, and spoke as if it were an established fact. He said, "if you have an established religion you must pay for it." But how and where was this payment provided? It certainly did not appear on the Estimates, from the very fact that no such payment was made. If the Church were disendowed to-morrow, the Chancellor of the Exchequer could not remit a penny of taxation in his approaching Budget. How, then, was the Church supported? By its own property, some of which was given it in very remote times, some in less remote times, and some in much more recent times. It was of this property which it was proposed to deprive the Church. It was true that in some instances the Church had sold some of her tithes, and otherwise invested the proceeds; in other instances the Church had been deprived of her property, notably in the time of Henry VIII., and so, what once belonged to her had passed into lay hands. He had been told of one instance in which the tithes had become the property of a dissenting body. The rightful ownership of such property it was not proposed to question. Upon what possible grounds of justice, then, could it be proposed to take it from the Church? It was curious reasoning, that because a portion of a property had been taken it is right to appropriate the remainder. If it could be shown that the property possessed by the Church, given to it for the service of God, was more than was required for its pious work, there might be some plausible reason for asking that a portion might be allocated for similar purposes through other agencies. But what was the fact? The average income of the 1,488 clergymen, if the whole revenues of the Church were divided equally, would amount to £220 a year. Few got over £300, very many under £150. Comment was needless. Such stipends were less than the wages often given to a cook. He maintained from his personal observation that the Church was doing a great spiritual work in Wales, and that at her own charge, unaided by the State. That this great work should continue to be done was, he asserted, of the greatest moment to the whole community, but especially to the poor. The Church and her property were the inheritance of the poor man. The poor man might or might not attend her services, but he had a right to free entry at all times to the ministrations of her clergy—whether for baptisms, marriages, or burials—and finally to be laid in the sacred ground of her churchyards; while the clergyman was often the only man within miles from whom he could seek counsel and advice, either in his spiritual or temporal difficulties. He asked that this inheritance might be preserved to the poor; and he ventured respectfully to hope that all who loved Christianity—laying aside all prejudices—would unite and prevent the great injury with which that Christianity was threatened.

*MR. J. LLOYD MORGAN (Carmarthen, West) said that, whatever the result of the introduction of the Bill might be, of one thing every one who was in favour of religious equality might congratulate himself, and it was that a great many of the arguments which were constantly put forward on the platforms of the Church Defence Society were at once and for ever dispelled. After the Bill was introduced last year there was a great meeting of the Church Party at Swansea, and the opinion was generally expressed that when the Welsh people knew what the Bill contained they would repudiate the measure. Since the Bill was introduced last Session, he and his colleagues had lost no opportunity of explaining the measure to their constituents, and to the people outside the borders of Wales. By the Bill, each Welsh Member, and all favourable to religious equality, were perfectly willing to stand or fall. By it the Church retained her articles, her doctrines, her rites, and her ceremonies. It had been said that when the Church was Disestablished the Churches would be turned into theatres and music halls, and the churchyards into playgrounds. [Sir R. WEBSTER: No, no.] He did not say that had been said by gentlemen in the position of the hon. and learned Gentleman, but the statement had been constantly made by those who went about speaking under the auspices of the Church Defence Society. Again, it was said the clergymen would suffer, as they had nothing but tithes on which to keep themselves. But under the Bill the vested interests of the clergy were protected. There was not a beneficed clergyman in the Established Church who, if the Bill became law, would not only receive compensation if he desired it, but his stipend as long as he remained in the Church. Not only did the Church retain all her modern Endowments—all the Endowments she had received during the last 200 years, but the plan by which it was proposed to bring about Disestablishment was of so gradual a character, and worked so slowly, that no sudden or severe strain would be put upon the resources of the Church, because she would be required to find by very slow degrees the money she would lose by Disestablishment. The hon. and gallant Member for South Bristol spoke of the blow which the Welsh people were making at Christianity. They had nothing of the kind. It was the Establishment they were concerned with. The hon. and gallant Member prefaced his speech by saying that he knew a great deal about the Welsh people. But if he knew any-at all about them, or understood their political action, he could not have made a statement so much at variance with the truth. The Welsh people made no blow at Christianity in their efforts to obtain religious equality. This question was one that appealed to their very deepest convictions, for they believed that it was contrary to the teaching of religion that there should be any connection whatever between the Church and State. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Bristol fell into exactly the same error when, confounding the Church with the Establishment, he spoke of the Welsh people being influenced by their hatred of the Church. The Welsh people were not opposed to the Church, and they never had been opposed to the Church. It was the purely political side of the question that appealed to them; it was the connection that existed between the Church and the State they wanted to see severed. It was their desire that the Church should flourish, and they believed that when the Church was free from the trammels which now bound her to the State she would become a far greater influence for good than she ever had been in the past. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Bristol also said that the Disestablished Church would be a very powerful Church. That was exactly what the Welsh people expected; and, more than that, it was exactly what they desired. It was said that during the last 20 years the Church had made great strides in Wales. Assuming this to be correct, for the sake of arugment, how did it carry the case of the opponents of the Bill forward? This was a political question, and not a religious question. The connection between the Church and State was of a purely political character. Parliament had always regarded it as such; and it was only by political action that that connection could be severed. But on the other side they had that which was admitted by the opponents of the Bill—the growth of Nonconformity. It was proved by the Welsh representation in the House. So that side by side with the growth of the Church the movement for Religious Equality was gaining ground. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Bristol said a religious census ought to be taken. The only census the House had to deal with was the census of the polling booth. In 1870 only seven Welsh Members voted for Disestablishment. When the Division was taken on this Bill 31 out of the 34 Members returned by Wales and Monmouthshire would vote for it. Could any stronger evidence be given of the opinions of the Welsh people on the question? Again many difficulties had been got rid of since 1870. First of all, there was the difficulty of separate Legislation for Wales. Wales had been separately treated from England in the case of the Sunday Closing Act; and even the last Conservative Government had adopted the precedent by passing a separate Bill dealing with Intermediate Education in Wales. But the greatest difficulty had been swept away by the passing of the Irish Church Act; for that Act laid down the principle that when national property had been exclusively used by one particular religious body that it was not sacrilege, but the exercise of an undoubted right, by Parliament to divert that property to causes that were beneficial to the people, and which were in harmony with the desires of the people. He would also point out that the Conservative Party had done a vast deal to push the question of the Disestablishment of the Welsh Church to the front. At a time when the question was scarcely mentioned on Liberal platforms the cry of "The Church in Danger" had been raised by Church people, not because there was any danger to the Church, but because Church people were more anxious to serve the interests of the Tory Party than to protect their Church. [*Opposition Cries of* "No, no!"] Perhaps hon. Gentlemen opposite would accept the words of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bury on that point. In 1885, when the Welsh Church question was not in the opinion of the Liberal Party within the range of practical politics, the right hon. Gentleman speaking at Radcliffe as a Churchman and as a friend of the Church said—

> "The Tory Party certainly preferred the interest of their Party to the stability of their Church Establishment. . . . . All that the Tory Party could do they were doing to make every Member of the Liberal Party hostile to the Church Establishment. . . . . Whatever might be the fate of the question hereafter let the record be made that it was the Tory Party who forced it to the front now. They pushed this question forward and fought behind it. What cowards they were! They were like men who being unable to defend the citadel placed the women and children on the ramparts and appealed to the enemy to beware that by firing on the town the weak and defenceless would suffer."

He accepted the Bill. He did not say that in every detail it came up to his ideal; but speaking generally he thought it was an excellent Bill. If the Government had not introduced it they would have done an injustice to the Welsh people. The question had been a burning question in Wales for a quarter of a century; and the more hon. Members looked into the condition of Wales the more they would find it conclusively proved that the voluntary principle was the principle by which religious bodies in Wales, as in other countries, promoted the best interests of Christianity.

MR. J. A. RENTOUL (Down, E.) said, that Members on the Opposition side were much struck by the frank admission of the hon. Member for West Carmarthen of the very point they had been chided for contending for—namely that this was purely and simply a political question. The hon. Member also made a frank display of the sentiments of his Party towards the Church when he said the Church will be allowed to retain her ceremonies, doctrines, and rites. Having taken away everything else from the Church the Party opposite could not well deprive her of her doctrines, ceremoines, and rites, unless they were prepared to reintroduce the principles of the Inquisition.

*MR. J. LLOYD-MORGAN said, he had also pointed out that the Church was left all her endowments for the last 200 years, and that all the vested interests of her clergy were protected.

MR. RENTOUL said that he accepted the hon. Member's explanation. The hon. Member also stated that the opponents of the Bill declared that the cathedrals and churches of Wales were to be turned into stables and theatres. That was one of those remarks which he had never heard anyone make. The hon. Member further adduced, as a reason for supporting the Bill, that the clergy of the Church were to be allowed to retain their incomes for life—that was to say, for the present generation. If it were good for the present generation, how could it be pronounced bad for future generations? All would frankly admit the ability of the Home Secretary, but compliments had been paid to the right hon. Gentleman in respect to the speech in which he introduced the Bill. It could hardly be dignified by the name of "speech," for it was a mere recapitulation of the leading provisions of the Bill, without a single argument in its favour. When the right hon. Gentleman dealt with the purposes to which the funds of the Church would be applied, there was no applause even from the Welsh Members, except in regard to the application of some of those funds to higher education. But there were some who believed that, though higher education was all very well from the secular point of view, the Church funds were now being devoted to the highest education, and that to divert them to any other purpose would be to degrade them. Though he was not a member of the Church of England, he entertained a fixed and emphatic hostility to Disestablishment in any shape. As an individual should belong to a Church, so the Church should definitely and in form acknowledge Christianity; and he did not see how that could be done apart from the vehicle of a Church. He defended existing Establishments, not only because they happened to exist, but because he approved of the principle of them. Even if they were indefensible in theory, still, if they worked well and bore good fruits, he held that they should be maintained. This question of Disestablishment and Disendowment was in no sense a political question; because it raised issues which would reach beyond the lifetime of present political parties, and exercise an influence for good or evil long after they had passed away. Before a man could believe in his heart that Disestablishment was right, he must believe that it would be a good thing for Christianity generally or for the particular Church to be disestablished. But even then, Disendowment must be for him quite a different matter. He might believe that a young man who possessed a large fortune, the gift and accumulation of his ancestors, would be a more useful person without it. But, even then, he had no right to touch that young man's possessions. In like manner, whatever his conclusion with regard to the Established Church in Wales, he had no right to touch her Endowments, which were not given by him or by the State. But those who were engaged in this Disestablishment and Disendowment movement, asserted that they were not actuated by envy or greed. They were divided into two classes—those who were inside and those who were outside the Church—which must have entirely different motives. The Churchman must desire

Disestablishment for the benefit and advancement of the Church; but that was not the principle which actuated the Nonconformists. They did not wish to develop the activity of the Church if they were true to their own faith. They must desire to see their own Nonconformist Church cover the whole ground. He was sure that no Welsh Nonconformist Member would dare to tell his constituents that his only desire was to benefit the Church as against Nonconformity. In the present case, the oldest Christian Church in Great Britain was under trial, and the evidence hitherto brought against her in all public speeches was not worthy of serious attention. The Church was largely unrepresented by those who were sent to the House by Churchmen. The clergy, who had been so much attacked, had no power of speaking for themselves in the House, and that ought to make hon. Members careful in the statements which they made. But the accusers of the Church seemed to have spent most of their time of recent years in playing the part of private detectives, on the look-out for hostile evidence only. The muck-rake had been largely used; and they had refused to look at what was bright in the history of the Church. It was because he thought that the defence of the Welsh Church should not be left only to those who were of her communion, that he took part in the Debate. He spoke as an outsider, and as one who, if he lived in Wales, would attend the worship of some Nonconformist Church. But he had seen a Church disestablished in his own country, and he knew that no good whatever had resulted. The country had become no more contented, and the Church itself had suffered enormously. People had stated that the Irish Church had not suffered from, but been benefited by, Disestablishment. He wished any utterance of leading Churchmen in Ireland could be quoted bearing out that statement. Of course, some irresponsible persons could always be found to make any statement; but the leading clergy of the Church had never said anything of the kind; and, if they had, it would not be true, nor would it be accepted by any man who knew Ireland and the state of the Church both before 1869 and now. It was sought to make Disestablishment in Ireland a precedent for Disestablishment in Wales, though it was impossible to find two cases more dissimilar. The Church in Ireland was an alien Church. It was the Church of England brought into Ireland, and a Church almost exclusively attended by the English, who first settled in Ireland. It was a Church forced into a country which never accepted the Reformation at all. It was never at any stage of its history the Church of more than one-eighth of the population. The grounds that Lord Rosebery urged in favour of Disestablishment in Scotland did not apply to Wales, yet he advocated Disestablishment there. The Prime Minister's position with regard to Disestablishment in Scotland was purely political. He said the Liberal Party had been forced to the conclusion that the Manse—or nearly every Manse—was an agency of the Tory Party. He wished to refer to Lord Rosebery's four reasons against the Church in Wales, and to show that the four facts he put forward were in reality four fictions. Lord Rosebery put forward as facts: (1), that the demand for the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales was so great as to be almost unanimous; (2), that the Church in Wales was a branch of the Church of England; (3), that the Welsh Church was an alien Church; and (4), that the State Church in Wales did more harm than good to the cause of religion. As to the supposed unanimity of the demand, the total electorate of Wales and Monmouthshire was 320,298, and the total number who voted for the Liberal Party and in favour of Disestablishment at the last election, was only 144,882, or about 43 per cent. Those who voted against it, or did not vote at all, were 176,726. With regard to the Church in Wales being a branch of the Church of England, the right hon. Member for Midlothian, speaking in the House of Commons in 1891, said—

> "It would be as reasonable to talk of the Church of Wales in England as to talk of the Church of England in Wales."

So that the ex-Prime Minister repudiated entirely the idea of the Church in Wales being a branch of the Church of England. Moreover, each of the Welsh dioceses applied to be received, and was received into the dominions of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Lord Rosebery said the Welsh Church was an alien Church. On this subject they had emphatic testimony from many quarters, and especially from the late Mr. Watkin Williams, who might be called the father of the Welsh Disestablishment Movement. On 24th May, 1870, he said—

> "The Church Establishment in the Principality of Wales was an ancient and venerable Institution. It was not like the Church in Ireland, an alien Church."

If there was anything alien in Wales, it was Nonconformity. The right hon. Member for Denbighshire once said that Dissent in Wales was a plant of foreign growth.

*SIR G. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbigshire, E.) dissented. He said in a speech delivered a quarter of a century ago that it was a plant of modern growth.

MR. RENTOUL said the right hon. Member was reported in "Hansard"—whose Reports were generally correct—to have used the word "foreign."

*SIR G. O. MORGAN said he had already explained that he used the word "modern."

MR. RENTOUL said the "Hansard" reporter seemed to have reported the right hon. Member more correctly than he expressed himself. The right hon. Member must know that of the two leading sects in Wales Wesleyan Methodism was introduced by John Wesley in England, and the sect of Independents by John Brown, an Englishman of Scotch extraction. Then the Prime Minister said the Church in Wales was doing more harm than good to the cause of religion. That was a serious charge to make against 1,488 clergymen. It was a charge which, if uttered by name with respect to an individual, would have rendered him liable to an action for slander. The right hon. Member for Midlothian had borne emphatic testimony to the Welsh Church, which he had described as an advancing and living Church, rising from elevation to elevation. He had said: "I have seen it grow under my own eyes," but, according to Lord Rosebery, it was a Church active in doing harm rather than good to the cause of religion. A Rev. Mr. Jones had been quoted by an hon. Member, and he would quote a Rev. Mr. Lewis Jones, a leading Nonconformist minister in Wales, on the staff of the North Wales University College. He wrote in the *Welsh National Quarterly* for July, 1891:—

> "Every honest Nonconformist will admit that a great reformation has taken place within the Established Church in Wales during recent years, and that the Church, especially in the towns, is gaining ground. The best class of Nonconformists are quite prepared to agree with all that Churchmen say touching the revival that exists among them. I say again, it would be dishonest on our part, as Nonconformists, to attempt to deny the progress that goes on within the Church in these days."

That was the most abundant testimony to the progress of this Church. The way in which Nonconformity in Wales was spoken of was very misleading, as there was more difference between the several Nonconformist Churches amongst themselves than between any single one of them and the Established Church. There was, for instance, vastly more difference in doctrine between a Welsh Calvinistic Methodist and a Welsh Wesleyan Methodist than between a Welsh Calvinistic Methodist and a member of the Established Church in Wales. With reference to the relative strength of these bodies, he wondered that Welsh Members ever referred to statistics, as they had again and again refused an official census. But though there was no official census, very important sidelights upon the question might be obtained from other statistics. According to the Registrar-General's report, in the last ten years there had been 13,000 more marriages by the clergy of the Church in Wales than by all the Nonconformist ministers put together. In 1885 the number of Sunday school scholars in the Church of England in Wales was 92,000; in 1893 it was 123,445, an increase of 33,000. The number of communicants in 1885 was 74,788; and in 1893, 114,885, an increase of over 40,000. The average per year of confirmation candidates from 1882 to 1892 was 9,654, and in 1893 the number was over 11,000. The burials attended by the Church of England clergy in Wales in the past ten years was 20,598; the burials attended by all Nonconformist ministers was 1,441. These statistics were very remarkable, and he did not understand how the Welsh Members could answer them. With regard to the sums contributed to hospitals in Wales, the Bishop of St. Asaph's, speaking last year, said that in the previous year, to the hospitals in Wales the Church contributed £11,574, and all the Nonconformists taken together contributed £2,917, so that the Church was subscribing four times as much as the Nonconformists. If their endowments were taken away clearly the hospitals must suffer very severely indeed. Moreover, half a century ago there were between 700 and 800 clergy in Wales; at the present moment there were 1,488, and all this increase was in an area whose total population was 1,700,000. That seemed to him to be the greatest increase in any religious denomination in the entire British Islands. He now came to the sadder and meaner side of the subject, and he was glad to see the hon. Member for Flintshire in his place, because he wished specially to refer to him. The hon. Member delivered a lecture at Rhyl in December last, and sent a copy to him, and probably did the same to other hon. Members. It was a remarkable document of 28 pages, and the title of it was, "The Religious Aspect of Disestablishment." Why did not the hon. Member give it the right title and call it "The Religious Aspect of Disendowment." But he dared not do that—for it would mean the religious aspect of taking from other men what belonged to them. Yet the first sentence of the lecture proved that the hon. Member meant Disendowment and nothing else, though he was not straightforward enough to say so. That first sentence was—

> "I am frequently asked in Wales to assist Nonconformist churches in their efforts to obtain funds to carry on their work"—

thereby clearly admitting the dreadful straits those churches were in. Yet this Bill would give them no money. But it was curious that more than three-fourths of the lecture were an attack on the Roman Catholic Church, and in the last note the hon. Member made this statement:—

> "It is objected that Ritualism is creeping into the Free Episcopal Churches of America and Australasia. I admit it, but these Churches have no hold on the masses of the people; they have not the prestige and the quasi sanction of an Establishment."

That was a gentleman who assumed to look at the religious aspect of this question—rather, perhaps, the irreligious aspect. The last six pages of the lecture were taken up entirely with the sale of indulgences in Germany by Tetzel 400 years ago. The syllogism of the conclusion of the lecture appeared to him to be this: The sale of indulgences is wrong; Tetzel sold indulgences in Germany; therefore we should Disestablish the Welsh Church. Lord Rosebery, speaking at Cardiff, said in reference to this matter that—

> "if the State gave funds for a certain purpose, it had the right to divert them to another purpose."

Supposing he admitted that proposition to the full, it would be an ungenerous thing for the State to do, but the State never gave a single penny to the Welsh Church, and therefore, according to Lord Rosebery's own contention, the State had no right to divert the funds of that Church. On this point, with regard to the funds of the Church, the Secretary of the right hon. Member for Midlothian, writing in December 1885, said:—

> "I am directed by Mr. Gladstone to inform you that the clergy are not State paid."

And Lord Granville, writing at the same time, said that—

> "tithes existed in England before Acts of Parliament."

Lord Rosebery said also:—

> "It is not wise for the Defenders of the Church to rest too much on the right of property, because if the indefeasible right of property vested in any way in these endowments it was vested not with the Reformed but with the Roman Catholic Church."

He was sorry the Prime Minister should have said such a thing as this. They would all admit that Lord Rosebery was an able and a scholarly man, but he could not have turned his attention recently to history, because otherwise he would hardly have made such a statement with regard to the Endowments of the Church in Wales in opposition to the testimony of many distinguished men, some of whom had been quoted in that Debate. Reference had been made to the possibility of compromise in this matter. But compromise with them was impossible. If a number of highwaymen attacked one of them on the highway and said they would take only three-fourths of his property; that if he would consent to this they would leave him the remaining one-fourth as a sort of compromise, and shake hands upon it—an independent man would rather lose all than accept such a compromise as that. Before he sat down he should like to refer to one other statement. The hon. Member for East Bradford, speaking at Cardiff, said it would be better to disestablish the publican first and take the parson afterwards, for he thought the publican did more harm. Now if that statement had come from a man who had recognised the publican as a fair and honourable trader, it might have passed, but the hon. Member had again and again compared the publican to the vilest outcasts of society, and had used every possible word of vituperation against him. Then to compare the clergy of any Christian Church with the publican, under such circumstances, on a public platform, and to say, in effect, they were pretty much in the same basket, was an insult, and unworthy of a fair-minded man. He wished now to refer to a totally different statement, and one which bore another complexion. In an interview, an hon. Member of the House was asked whether all Nonconformist churches were in an unsatisfactory state. He replied :—

> "Nearly all of them are; many large Nonconformist churches are mere places of business for securing the income of the minister; hardly any of them are doing aggressive work or doing anything to fight the devil. As a matter of fact, said the hon. Member, the denomination that more than any other was doing work among the poor, the miserable, and the wretched and the sinful is the Church of England."

Who was the hon. Member who made the statement ? No less a man than the hon. Member for East Bradford. Had ever any Party been engaged in a poorer crusade ? If the Welsh people only knew what they were to get ! It was admitted that of the £280,000 of Church revenues in Wales only £150,000 could be taken away altogether. That would give the inhabitants of Wales 1s. 8¼d. each for pulling down the oldest monument of religion in the country. "Gallant little Wales!" One-and-eightpenny Wales ! The Church in Wales was the splendid inheritance of the poor of that country, and it was doing a great work. His view was, that a State Church was a great power for good, because it gave an impetus to national life, built up the national character, and fixed national principles to an extent which no non-State-recognised Church could possibly do. And, in spite of past failures, the Church in Wales was, after all, the Mother from whom all Nonconformist Churches had sprung. It was the oldest monument of Welsh nationality. Its creed was fixed, its doctrines were definite, and it could not be used, and never had been used, as the tool of any particular Party. Its temples of worship had never been desecrated, as Nonconformist chapels frequently were, as the battle-ground of political parties. It was bound by its connection with the State to hold a dignified course, and among all the sects in Wales none had shown greater charity towards its foes. He would say to Welsh Members, in view of the great work the Church was doing in Wales, and in view of the small satisfaction which Irish Disestablishers felt when their work was done, that it would be better to leave churches and chapels alone to vie with each other in promoting that honesty and charity, that integrity and sobriety, which so much exalted a nation, and in that way to place Wales in the forefront of the United Kingdom and of the British Empire.

*Sir G. OSBORNE MORGAN said the hon. Member, in the course of his very amusing, but somewhat discursive, speech, addressed a challenge to Welsh Liberal Members which ought to be answered at once. He asked whether any Welsh Churchman would dare to get up and say that he advocated the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales because he believed Disestablishment would be for the benefit of that Church.

Mr. RENTOUL: The right hon. Gentleman is mistaken. I said I would ask any Welsh Member to go to his Nonconformist constituents and tell them that he desires to disestablish the Church in order that it may be so improved as to practically blot out and overcome Welsh Nonconformity.

*Sir G. OSBORNE MORGAN said, he was a Welsh Churchman and the son of a Welsh clergyman, and he had over and over again told his constituents that he advocated the Disestablishment of the Welsh Church because he believed that, if disestablished, that Church would be infinitely more powerful for good than it was now. He would not further follow the hon. Member over the wide field which he had traversed. They would have ample opportunities of dealing with his arguments at future stages of the Bill. He agreed with the Home Secretary that, of all the devices for consuming time which had been invented in recent years, the practice of making Second Reading speeches on the First Reading of a Bill was the most mischievous. The right hon. Gentleman had told the House that practically and substantially this was the same Bill he introduced last year, and therefore he (Sir G. O. Morgan) would content himself with repeating what he said last year, viz. : that he believed, without in any way committing himself to its details, the Bill was a just and statesmanlike measure; and, looked at from point of view of hon. Gentlemen opposite, it was most certainly the very best Bill they would ever get. But he rose to address a very respectful and earnest appeal to the opponents of this measure. Of course, he did not refer to Members like the noble Lord the Member for Rochester (Viscount Cranborne) and some others he saw opposite to him who held, with perfect sincerity—and he honoured them for their sincerity—that the Church of England ruled by a sort of Divine right over all the counties south of the Tweed, and that any attempt to interfere with its privileges and endowments was the worst form of sacrilege. To argue with those gentlemen was useless. But surely there were some hon. Gentlemen opposite —he knew there were many amongst his Liberal Unionist Friends—who took a more practical, or a more matter-of-fact view of the situation. Now he wished to ask them whether they really believed that, by fighting this Bill, line by line, and clause by clause, as he was told they intended to do, or by throwing it over to another Session, or even another Parliament, they could avert the doom which was hanging over the Established Church in Wales? [*Opposition Cries of* "Yes."] If that be the view of hon. Gentlemen opposite, it was certainly not the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, for he had said in the most emphatic way that Disestablishment in Wales must come, and the only question was by what method it could be accomplished. It was not the opinion of the most far-seeing Churchmen in Wales. They knew that the weakness of the Church in Wales lay in the fact that its main support came from without, that the citadel was held—not by native levies, but by foreign auxiliaries. The editor of *The Aberystwith Observer*—whose names had a very Saxon ring, (whose views were vainly sought to be discredited in *The Times* by two gentlemen) writing to *The Times* the other day, said :—

> "I give you my word for it that Churchmen, almost to a man, would be glad to be disestablished, and many of them are prepared for a degree of Disendowment, whilst some would accept almost any terms so long as they got Disestablishment. It must not for a moment be supposed that all Welsh Churchmen are prepared to 'die in the last ditch' for the principle of Disestablishment. In Wales, amongst Churchmen and Nonconformists, the whole thing resolves itself into a question of terms. I am sure the views expressed by Mr. Chamberlain in his letter are the best for the Church."

That threw some light upon the folly of the cry for a religious census, which could not tell them what they really wanted to know—not the proportion of Welsh Churchmen to Welsh Nonconformists, but the number of Welshmen, whether Churchmen or Nonconformists, who were in favour of Disestablishment. He had lived in Wales probably longer than any man in the House, and therefore he warned the Opposition not to be misled, not to be bamboozled, by what they heard, or even by what they saw going on in Wales. If he might venture to offer them a piece of respectful advice, it would be that of the old lady, who at the end of a long life, said she had learned to believe nothing she heard and only half what she saw. Hon. Members saw English money poured like water into the Church in Wales for every purpose, from the repair of a dilapidated Church, or the purchase of a parish magic lantern, to the payment of the election expenses of any Church candidate — or, to give him the popular name, any "Grosvenor House" candidate—who was willing to put the holder of a Liberal seat, however safe, to the worry, annoyance, and the cost of a contest. If men chose to be so foolish as to invest their money in such hopeless enterprises, perhaps no one had a right to complain. Yet, he thought it was a little hard on his colleagues and himself, who were, of course, comparatively poor men, that they should be put to the expense of £1,300, £1,400, or £1,500 simply because a knot of enormously wealthy Peers, in ostentatious defiance of the Standing Order of the Commons, could afford to throw away £1,000 as easily as he and his friends could spend a £10-note. But of this he was sure—not all the gold in the coffers of the Duke of Westminster, not all the gold in the Bank of England, could ever turn the Established Church of England into the National Church of Wales. It was an alien Church. ["No."] Well, he would produce some evidence of that. It was alien in its spirit. It was alien in its attitude towards the great national movement going on in Wales. He referred hon. Gentlemen opposite to the words of Professor Goldwin Smith, with whom he did not always agree, who said that the Celtic peasant might be a fervid Catholic, or a fervid Presbyterian, or a fervid Methodist, but a staid and decorous Anglican he never could or would be. The breach was becoming wider every day, because, while the nation was growing more democratic, the Church was growing more oligarchical. How could it be otherwise when the Church assumed its present attitude to the great nationalist movement now going on in Wales? How could it be otherwise when they saw Welsh Prelates and English Peers combining together to maul and mutilate educational schemes which had received the unanimous support of the local authorities of Wales? How could it be otherwise when they saw the Church Defence Institution flouting and insulting in every way they could the spirit of Welsh nationality? ["How?"] Were they not told that Wales was only an "appanage" of England, and that they in Wales were not entitled to have Disestablishment because England was not ripe for it? Was that the way to appeal to the patriotic sympathies of the Welsh people? Was it common justice? He did not expect hon. Members opposite to accept what he said on this question, but would they accept what the flower of the Welsh clergy said? Last year a great deal was said about a revolt in the Welsh Parliamentary Party. It did not look like it now. The revolt was now in the opposite camp, and it was a revolt which would shake the Church to its foundation. It was the rift which, although it might not make the music mute, would, at all events, cause the lute to give out some most discordant sounds. He called the most earnest attention of hon. Gentlemen opposite to the manifesto which had been issued by the most eminent Churchmen in Wales. Numerically they were few, and that was not surprising. In Wales nearly all the Church patronage was in the hands of the Diocesan, and clergymen with small incomes and large families could not be expected to quarrel with the patron of 109 livings. But the manifesto was signed or approved by the Warden of the Diocesan School of Divinity at Bangor, by the Vicar of Bangor, by the Vicar of Welshpool, by the Vicar of Llanidloes, and others. These eminent Churchmen, nearly all Oxford First-Classmen, declared that their object was—

> "to put an end to the present intolerable situation and to the disastrous conflict which is at present destroying our national unity and impairing our spiritual life."

And how did they propose to carry out that object? By disestablishing the Church of England in Wales, by cutting Wales adrift from the Established Church, by—

> "constituting the ancient British Church into a separate province, entirely distinct from the province of Canterbury and the Anglican Church, and so restoring to her her ancient national character."

But if that "national character" had to be "restored," it was obvious that it had been lost, and they went on to say:—

> "At present our leaders in the Church and the Conservative Party are bewildered by the national awakening which we see on all sides in politics, in literature, in education. The whole stream of the national revival is flowing past us."

Archdeacon Howell, the most eloquent and gifted clergyman in Wales, in a sermon some time ago, preached at St. Margaret's, Westminster, said—

> "The weakness of the Church in Wales is due to the fact that so much of the best blood of the nation no longer runs in her veins. It is sheer folly to hide from ourselves the fact that the most vigorous life of the Welsh people no longer wells forth from the heart of the Welsh Church. What is the exact proportion of the people to

be found within and without the Church is a matter of secondary importance. Far more important is the fact that so large a portion of the vigour and enthusiasm of the Welsh people is in full activity outside the Church."

He asked them, in the face of that evidence, coming from the foremost Churchmen in Wales, was it wise to kick against the pricks? Was it wise to oppose the eternal *non possumus* to the demand supported by 31 out of the 34 Members for Wales and Monmouthshire, returned to the House of Commons by an average majority of 2,000? The hon. Member for Sunderland had well said last week that the unanimity of Wales on this subject was unparalleled in the annals of Parliamentary history. Nor could they forget the memorable utterance of the present Duke of Devonshire, in a speech he made in Scotland 16 years ago, when he said that questions of Disestablishment and Disendowment must be settled by the opinions and votes of the constitutionally elected Representatives of the people affected by them. It was quite possible that by the aid of Peers and Prelates, who knew about as much of Wales as of Uganda, and perhaps less, the solution of this question might be delayed until the cry for Disestablishment swelled into a chorus; but what would be gained by that? The longer the settlement was delayed the worse would that settlement be. As those Welsh clergymen had told them in their manifesto, it would be the story of the Sybilline Books over again; and the time would come when the best friends of the Church would look back upon the policy inaugurated that day, as its consequences gradually unfolded themselves, with feelings of bitterness and unavailing regret.

*Mr. ARTHUR S. T. GRIFFITH-BOSCAWEN (Kent, Tunbridge) said, the right hon. Gentleman had stated that the Church would go on better if she were disestablished; he had also told his constituents it would be stronger and more able to do its work if it were disendowed. [Sir G. OSBORNE MORGAN: "Yes."] But why had he not also told his Nonconformist friends that they would be stronger if they were disendowed? A good deal was said about congregations supplying their own ministers on the voluntary system. No doubt it was an excellent system where you had rich congregations; but there were many parishes in Wales where there was no resident Nonconformist minister, and, if there were no Church Endowment there would be no clergyman. In those cases, he asked not whether the Church would be stronger, but whether the Christian religion would not cease to exist. If the voluntary system was so good why was it that Nonconformists strained every nerve to obtain Endowments? Why was it that in England they had hundreds of chapels endowed? There was one place in Wales where a chapel had an endowment of £14. 10s. a year from a fully-licensed public house; and he wondered whether the Nonconformists there were in favour of a Local Veto Bill without compensation. Perhaps some day a majority of two-thirds of the Churchmen of the parish might carry Prohibition and Disendowment by the same vote. If it were true that the help of the Church in Wales came "mainly from the outside," how came it that in the last 50 years the number of clergy in Wales had doubled although the stipends had fallen? How came it that the number of children in National Schools belonging to the Church had doubled? How came it that the number of scholars in the Sunday schools had increased six-fold? How came it that the number of communicants had doubled in 20 years? The truth was, there had been an enormous increase in Church work, and the people were coming back to the Church. The other day at a meeting at Brymbo a working man said they often had to make way for the hon. Baronet opposite because the Church was so full. The increased adhesion of the Welsh people had become so marvellous that the supporters of the Bill knew that if they did not strike a fatal blow at once it would soon be impossible to do so. He asked this Government what mandate they had from the constituencies. They spoke of their majority in Wales; but what mandate had they from England, not only to disestablish and disendow the Church in Wales, but also to mutilate the Church in England, to cut up the dioceses and re-arrange parishes, to destroy Convocation and to break up the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and, in fact, the whole fabric of the Church in England? The Prime Minister had contended that Parliament must have the assent of the "predominant partner" before it proceeded to break up the Union; so, in the same way, the Government ought to have a similar assent before proceeding to Disestablish the Welsh Church. The question of Disestablishment had not been brought before the constituencies at the last election, but even granting that it had, there was a majority of 80 against Disestablishment from England. He asserted that Disestablishment had never been brought specifically before the Welsh constituencies at the last election. In analysing the election addresses of the leading Welsh Radical Members, he showed that the hon. Member for Merionethshire put Local Self-Government for Ireland, Scotland and Wales as the first item, Disestablishment next, the three F's next, Liquor Traffic Reform, and the Abolition of the House of Lords. The hon. Member for Mid Glamorgan put Home Rule for Ireland first, Disestablishment next, then the Eight Hours Bill, Employers' Liability Bill, general sympathy with the Labour Movement, Taxation of Ground Rents, Local Veto, the three F's, One Man One Vote, and Parish Councils. The hon. Member for Cardiff put Home Rule first, Disestablishment next, sympathy with the Labour Party, and Graduated Income-Tax to follow. Thus the leading Welsh Radicals had not even put Disestablishment first on their programme. There were 314,540 voters in Wales. Of this number 145,818 voted for Gladstonian candidates, and 86,883 for Unionist candidates. Only 47 per cent. of the whole electors of Wales recorded votes in favour of Gladstonian candidates at the last election, though the President of the Board of Trade at Cardiff stated that the whole of the Welsh nation had recorded a vote in favour of Disestablishment. Instead of there being 31 Gladstonian Members there ought to be only 22; instead of three Unionists there ought to be 12; and he asserted that if the Church question had been put as fair and straight to the people at the last election as it would be at the next, the result to-day would have been very different. But, taking the last election as a test, he maintained that there was no real mandate from the English or Welsh people in favour of this Bill. Why was not a religious census taken in 1891? It had been proposed by Baron Dimsdale in the House, and it was supported by the Church Party. Not a Churchman in the House or in the country flinched from the result of a religious census. Lord Rendel and the right hon. Baronet objected to it on the ground that a religious census would be a means whereby a large number of persons who did not clearly state their views, or who stated them wrongly, would be classed as members of the Church of England when they were not. But the census proposed, in the first place, was an optional census, and the people who did not choose to state their religious views, needed not to do so. In the second place—and he called special attention to this—the absurdity of the statement that people would state their opinions wrongly was proved by this, that the right hon. Baronet opposite himself used these words:—

> "In Wales there is a deep religious feeling, and I am perfectly certain that the people would have no hesitation in stating correctly their religious views."

What fear, then, had hon. Members opposite that people who were not members of the Church would be classed as such? The only fear they had was that the Church would come out a great deal stronger than they wished to make out. They knew the result would be such as utterly to ruin the cause of Welsh Disestablishment in the House. Hon. Members opposite objected to official religious censuses, but they were very fond of taking amateur censuses. Year after year amateur censuses were taken by the Nonconformists in Wales. Mr. Gee took one in 1877, but he chose a day in the winter, when people might be prevented from going to church by the weather. The day was also a Calvinistic festival, but, even in these circumstances, so unsatisfactory was the result, that the figures were never published. In 1891, a certain Nonconformist busybody took a census of the people in church and chapel in Brymbo; but he omitted altogether 367, the congregation of St. Paul's Church, although he counted the inhabitants of that district in the total population. Thus were hon. Members driven by their fear of a religious census into such ridiculous devices, in order to make out that the Church was as weak as they contended. All sorts of estimates were brought forward by them as to the real strength of the Church. In 1871, Mr. Watkin Williams stated that the number of church people in Wales was 1-6th of the whole population. In 1866, Mr. Dillwyn spoke of 1-8th. In 1891, the hon. Member for Merthyr stated them at 1-6th; and, in 1892, the hon. Member for Flint stated them at 1-4th, though, on the same evening, as if to make up for such generosity, the hon. Member for Carnarvon put them at 1-10th. Thus, on the same night, there was the very large discrepancy between 1-4th and 1-10th, or of about 263,000, which was the size of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists, the strongest sect in Wales. He would take one last instance of the absurdity of the figures put forward on which they were asked to proceed with their Bill. His right hon. Friend who spoke last, has recently issued a remarkable pamphlet called "The Church of England and the People of Wales." The right hon. Gentleman was in a great difficulty. He had to prove that the members of the Church were not so strong as the strongest Nonconformist sect. Finding that there were 114,000 communicants on Easter Day, he multiplied that number by two and, adding on a few as a margin, actually said that the total number of Church people was 250,000.

*SIR G. OSBORNE MORGAN explained that the figures were not his own, but were taken from the *Liberal Magazine.* He, however, accepted the full responsibility for them. The statement in question was that if the proportion of Church adherents to Church communicants was the same as the proportion of Nonconformist adherents to Nonconformist communicants, the number would be as stated.

*MR. GRIFFITH-BOSCAWEN obobserved that everything depended upon the meaning ascribed to the word "communicants." In the Church nobody could be a communicant who was not of a certain age and who had not been confirmed. What conditions had to be fulfilled by communicants in the Nonconformist bodies he did not know. To suppose that 45 per cent. of the Church people could be communicants was absurd. Besides, the same Year Book, which stated the communicants as 114,000, also stated there were 129,000 children in the Church Sunday Schools. It followed, therefore, that according to the right hon. Baronet's explanation there were only 7,000 Church people in Wales who were not either communicants on a certain day or children in Sunday School, which was ridiculous. The Bishop of St. Asaph had pointed out that the leading Nonconformist sects in Wales numbered only 47 per cent. of the whole population, and the late Dr. Dillwyn estimated the minor sects in Wales and the Roman Catholics at 3 per cent. If these figures were accepted it followed that the total number of Nonconformist Christians in Wales amounted to only 50 per cent. Then the hon. Member for Carnarvonshire declared that the adherents of the Church of England numbered only 10 per cent. It would appear, therefore, that 40 per cent. of the people did not go to any place of worship. The hon. Member for Merthyr had said that there were 500,000 atheists in Wales.

MR. D. A. THOMAS asserted that he had never said anything of the kind.

*MR. GRIFFITH-BOSCAWEN asked whether the hon. Member would deny that he had said that there were 500,000 people who refrained from going to any place of worship.

MR. D. A. THOMAS said that he did deny it.

*MR. GRIFFITH-BOSCAWEN accepted the hon. Member's statement, of course. The conclusions to be drawn, however, from the calculations of the hon. Member and his friends was that 40 per cent. of the population did not go to places of worship. In order, therefore, to prove that the Church was weak, hon. Members below the Gangway found themselves compelled to make the libellous suggestion that 40 per cent. of the people did not attend any church or chapel. Never was a Bill brought before this House with less reason. The House was asked to Disestablish and Disendow the Church in Wales for two reasons. The first was that it was an alien Church. That statement had been disproved time after time, and by none more effectually than by the right hon. Member for Midlothian. The second was because it was alleged to represent a miserable minority of the people. Of that the supporters of the Bill had no proof, and they were the people who refused to have any proof. There was only one fact known about the Church, and that was that it was growing in strength every day. He might add, as the complement of that truth, that dissent was declining every day in Wales, and he made that statement on the authority, not of a Churchman, but of Mr. J. R. Davies, a leading Nonconformist, speaking at a meeting of the Welsh Nonconformist Union at Carnarvon on October 20, 1892, when he ascribed to this "purely political aspiration" for Disestablishment the "spiritual poverty" of Welsh dissent. In truth, the day of dissent was entirely over in Wales. Its origin was due to the abuse of Chuch patronage in the last century, when English bishops and English vicars banished the Welsh language from the Church Service; but now there was a Welsh Service in every single church in Wales where there was a Welsh congregation. The result was that the *raison d'être* of Welsh dissent had gone, and the people were coming back every day from the chapels into the Church. He could not congratulate the Home Secretary on the changes he had introduced into the Bill. The only new thing the right hon. Gentleman appeared to have done was to discover that museums and academies of art were religious institutions. He could tell the right hon. Gentleman that the Welsh farmers and tithe-payers would have no sympathy with that proposal. Some time ago he heard a Welsh tithe-payer, a Nonconformist, discussing this very proposal say—

> "I object to paying tithe to an alien Church, but I prefer to do that to giving it to an old-bones house."

The Government would find it rather difficult to satisfy the Welsh tithe-payers that a museum or old-bones house was a religious institution. The Bill remained not only one that ought never to have been brought in, but a measure which in its terms was most unjust, unfair, and illiberal to the Church it was proposed to Disestablish and Disendow. He ventured to think that this was a political Bill brought in for political reasons; it was most unjust and unfair in its methods, and neither in the country nor in that House would Churchmen offer any compromise whatever. They should oppose the Bill line by line, and clause by clause, believing it to be a most unfair and unjust measure, brought in merely in order to purchase votes for a tottering Government, which felt that without a measure of this sort it must inevitably come to grief in a short time.

MR. ABEL THOMAS (Carmarthen, E.), referring to the last speaker, said, that the hon. Member really being the Church Member for Wales, they naturally thought he would have carefully looked through his facts and have made sure of their veracity before he had given expression to them in that House. But how very untrue to reality many of these statements were! The quotations he had made from speeches alleged to have been delivered by hon. Members on the Liberal side of the House had been immediately contradicted and shown to be utterly without foundation and under these circumstances one must naturally come to the conclusion that one must take some of the hon. Gentleman's other facts with a large amount of salt. What did the hon. Member say about the number of the Church of England people in Wales? He said that, at any rate, they consisted of 243,000 persons, because there were 129,000 children who attended Church schools and 114,000 who were communicants. He quietly added the two numbers together, and, his arithmetic being perfectly accurate, got the total of 243,000. But were there no communicants in the Church of England who went to Sunday schools? [An hon. MEMBER: "They are children."] It was new to him that nobody went to Church of England schools of 10 or 11 or 12 years of age. He knew a considerable number of communicants of that age in the Church of England—or certainly of the ages of 13 and 14—and these were just the persons who would go to the Sunday School. Why, therefore, they should be added and made two instead of one, he could not understand. Again, with regard to the Calvinist Methodists, the hon. Member said he had the authority of the *Year Book* for the statement that they numbered only 250,000. [Mr. GRIFFITH-BOSCAWEN: "I said 268,000."] He had the *Year Book* for 1892-93 before him, and he saw that the Calvinist Methodists numbered 292,000 odd. If all the hon. Member's "facts" were to be treated in the same way as those which they had been able to detect and correct at a moment's notice, they must not rely very much upon them. Dealing with the election statistics the hon. Member had told them that in Wales there were 145,000 Gladstonian voters and 86,000 Unionist. How did he obtain his figures? The hon. Gentleman had stated that where there was no election in 1892 he had taken the previous contest. But was that fair? In his own constituency he (Mr. Thomas) was opposed by a Nonconformist, who said he believed in Disestablishment and Disendowment; and his hon. Friends the Members for Cardiganshire, Carmarthen Boroughs, and Anglesea could tell the same tale; and yet these were the figures, obtained in such a way, which the Bishop of St. Asaph and the Member for the Church of England in Wales, flouted before them as those who believed in Disendowment and Disestablishment. The Unionist Party had tried their utmost to conceal the issue from the people, and to put Disestablishment and Disendowment in the background. If, however, they thought that their only hope of success was by admitting that Disestablisment was the right thing for Wales, they had put forward Unionists, like the right hon. Member for West Birmingham, who on his visit to Wales told the Welsh people he knew much better than their own Members what was good for them, and that if they wanted Disestablishment and Disendowment they must go to the Unionist Party for it. He could show within five miles of his own home in Pembrokeshire, half-a-dozen parishes which had no resident clergyman in them, while, on the other hand, there were parishes in the same county, consisting perhaps of one farmhouse and three or four workmen's cottages, which did possess a clergyman. It was childish to play with the Welsh people in that way. The great question was, whether they had a chapel to which they could go, and if they had one, it did not matter a brass farthing whether it was on one side of a stream or on the other. It had been said that Nonconformity was an alien religion in Wales, but nothing was wider the mark than such a statement as that. One hundred and fifty years ago, when there was scarcely a Baptist or Nonconformist chapel in Wales there might have been some truth in the statement, yet it must be recollected that there had always been Nonconformity in Wales. What was the state of the Church of England there 150 years ago? Her religion was dead in Wales at the time, and the little Nonconformist centre had to do their work in a cottage up in the hills, where they were beyond discovery. The result was, that from that time they gained strength throughout the whole of Wales, while the English Church remained dead—in fact, it was dead so far as its work was concerned 50 years ago. He recollected the time when he could have pointed out half-a-dozen clergymen near his own home, who were notorious drunkards and evil livers. That state of things had happily passed away, and of late years the Church had certainly awakened to her position, and had made some progress in power and had increased in strength; but it was useless for hon. Members to lay ridiculous statements before the House, endeavouring to show that the Church was now six times as big in Wales as she ever was. Of course the increase in the population must be taken largely into account in that matter; and he claimed that the progress of Nonconformity had been infinitely quicker in Wales than that of the Established Church. Some reference had been made to the Rhondda Valley. Well, he could pick out 30 Nonconformist chapels which had been built there during the same period in which the Church had been said to have made such advances in that particular district. He maintained that the Nonconformists, besides increasing their numbers to a greater degree than the Church, were engaged in the good work of reaching and looking after a class of persons which the Church itself did not touch. The Church failed most in places where she was rich, and succeeded best in places where there were no tithes or endowments. Go where they would go through Wales, they would find that where there were big endowments the Church did not succeed, for only a few rich people, such as the squire and his retainers, attended the services. But where there were no endowments—where there was a poor clergyman who stood on the same footing as the poor Nonconformist Minister, and both had to fight against poverty, the Church and the Chapel were each as good as the other in missionary work. The hon. Member for East Down said the Church of England in Wales was the Church of the poor, and advanced a most astonishing reason in support of that assertion. He said that three-fourths of the people in the poor-houses were Church people. If that was true, it was the greatest disgrace and the greatest blot upon the whole Church Party in Wales. If the richest people in Wales allowed their poor in their old age to go into the workhouses, and the Nonconformists kept their poor out of those asylums, it was a disgrace to the Church people. The hon. Member might, he believed, also claim that three-fourths of the prisoners in the gaols were Church people. But it was ridiculous to advance such arguments. It was true that a large number of the poor called themselves Church people in order to receive doles. If, however, the dress of the people who attended the chapels was compared with the attire of the people who frequented the churches, it would be at once seen that the mass of the poor were Nonconformists. The hon. Member for East Down also said that the Nonconformists in Wales were a political party; and that at least that charge could not be made against the Church. He wondered whether the hon. Member had ever been in Wales during election time. Did the hon. Member know that at elections the representatives of the Church were to be found on political platforms, and always on the Unionist side? Practically the whole of the Church people and a small proportion of Nonconformists were on one side in politics, and the whole of the Nonconformists with a very small number of Church people were on the other. So long as that condition of things lasted there must be something radically wrong in the state of the country, and he could not conceive of a greater danger to the State than that the whole of the Nonconformists should be Radicals, and the whole of the Church people Unionists. The hon. Member for East Down then went on to say that the Church had charity for those outside her fold. Most of his friends were Churchmen, unfortunately; and speaking from experience, he ventured to say that there was infinitely more bitterness and uncharitableness on the part of Church people towards Nonconformists, than on the part of Nonconformists towards Church people. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bristol also said that the Nonconformists never did a thing and never said a thing in favour of Church people. He begged to deny that statement. His constituency was as Nonconformist as any constituency in Wales; and he had always declared in his speeches to his constituents that in his opinion Disestablishment and Disendowment would strengthen the Church in Wales. What they wanted was religious equality. Of two farmers' sons, why should the one be looked up to and the other looked down upon by the neighbours because the first went to the church and the second went to a Nonconformist chapel? The only way of finding the opinion of the Welsh people on this question was from the Representatives they sent to Parliament. A religious census would only show how many believed in the religion of the Established Church and how many believed in some Nonconformist faith. The question was, what the Welsh people thought of Disestablishment, and about that question they were practically unanimous. It would be much better for the Conservative Party to pass this Bill through the House of Commons and the House of Lords. They would greatly strengthen their own hands by so doing.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Viscount Wolmer*).

Motion agreed to.

SEED POTATOES SUPPLY (IRELAND) BILL.

Bill re-considered in Committee.

Mr. JOHN ELLIS in the Chair.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

MR. T. SEXTON (Kerry, N.) said that he regretted the Chief Secretary's enforced absence. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman in charge of the Bill (Mr. G. Russell) would say whether the Government had considered the point raised upon the Second Reading with respect to the period to be allotted for the re-payment of loans. He believed that the Government were disposed to meet the suggestion that the period of two year was too short.

MR. GEORGE RUSSELL (Bedfordshire, N.) said that the hon. Gentleman gave him more honour than he was entitled to. He was not in charge of the Bill. His committee, with respect to Irish affairs, was exhausted in answering questions that afternoon, and he could give no assurances with respect to the Bill.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.) said that it was obviously difficult to go on with the Bill in Committee in the regretable absence of the Chief Secretary. He thought that the Bill ought to be passed as soon as possible; but he understood that the work which the Bill contemplated was going forward, and that no injury would result from waiting for the Chief Secretary's return.

MR. SEXTON suggested that clauses 1 to 5 should be agreed to, and that clause 6 should be held over.

Mr. Abel Thomas.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL said, that he had points to raise on those clauses. He moved, therefore, that Progress should be reported.

Motion agreed to.

COMMISSIONERS OF SEWERS OF THE CITY OF LONDON (BATHS AND WASH-HOUSES) BILL.

SECOND READING.

MR. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough), proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time." The hon. Gentleman said that it was introduced at the request of the Commissioners of Sewers, and that it was in no way a Party measure. Its object was to place the City on the same footing as all other towns in the United Kingdom. If the Second Reading were agreed to, he should be glad to consider Amendments in Committee.

Motion agreed to.

CONVENTION OF ROYAL BURGHS (SCOTLAND) ACT (1879) AMENDMENT BILL.

Bill read 2°.

HOUSE OF COMMONS (VACATING OF SEATS).

Ordered—

"That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire and Report on the circumstances attending the issue of the Writ for the Attercliffe Division of Sheffield, on the 26th day of June, 1894, and also to inquire into the Law and Practice of Parliament in reference to the Vacating of Seats in the House of Commons, and whether it is desirable that any, and, if so, what, changes should be made therein."

The Committee was accordingly nominated of Mr. Secretary Asquith, Mr. Attorney General, Mr. Balfour, Sir James Carmichael, Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Curzon, Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. John Ellis, Mr. T. M. Healy, Sir Henry James, Mr. Grant Lawson, Mr. MacNeill, Sir George Osborne Morgan, Sir John Mowbray, and Viscount Wolmer.

Ordered—That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered—That Five be the quorum.—(*Mr. Thomas Ellis.*)

House Adjourned at Ten minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, 26th February 1895.

ST. ANDREWS UNIVERSITY.

THE LORD PRIVY SEAL (Lord TWEEDMOUTH) moved—

> "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty praying that the reference to the Duncan Bursaries in the University of St. Andrews may be omitted from the schedule to the Ordinance No. 57 (General, No. 19, Regulations as to Bursaries, Scholarships, and Fellowships) made by the Scottish University Commissioners on July 30th, 1894, and now before Parliament."

He said that the object of the Motion was simply to provide a convenient method of making a formal alteration in the last Ordinance of the Commissioners. The Ordinance had to lie on the Table of the House for 12 weeks, and it was laid on August 8th. By the Scottish Universities Act of 1889, the Commissioners were empowered to regulate Endowments, Bursaries, and so forth, which had been in force for 25 years or more before the passing of the Act. The Scottish Universities were empowered to give to the Commissioners lists of their Endowments with the dates at which they were founded. The University of St. Andrews included in their list the Duncan Bursary as having been founded in 1814, and the Commissioners dealt with it and included it in the Ordinance. Since that time it had been found that the University authorities were entirely at fault with regard to that Bursary, and that it was founded in 1867 and, therefore, did not come within the scope of the Act. The course he had taken was in consonance with precedents, and, therefore, he begged to ask their Lordships' consent to the Motion which stood in his name.

LORD ASHBOURNE said he had read the Ordinance, and when he looked at the statute he could not see why an exception was made in this case. The noble Lord's explanation appeared to bring it within the 25 years prescribed, and therefore cleared the matter up.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned at Twenty-five minutes before Five o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 26th February 1895.

The House met soon after Three of the clock.

LIVERPOOL NEW CATTLE MARKET AND RAILWAY BILL

*COLONEL SANDYS (Lancashire, S.W., Bootle) moved the Second Reading of this Bill, which, he said, concerned materially the Bootle Division, which he represented. At present the cattle intended to supply the meat market in Liverpool were landed on the east side of the river Mersey, and the cattle, after being taken from the steamers, had to be driven through the streets to the cattle market, situated at Stanley, between four and five miles distant. The residents there would be glad to have the market removed. What was proposed was that the cattle market, slaughter-houses, and lairages for cattle should be built on a site in Bootle which was not residential, and where all the arrangements would be on the most approved modern system. At present the abattoir was situated in the centre of Liverpool; and after the cattle were driven for four or five miles for the purpose of being sold, they had to be driven back to the centre of the great city to be slaughtered. The death-rate in the district surrounding the abattoir was estimated to exceed by 30 per cent. the death-rate of any other part of the city. There had been a large hospital recently constructed in Liverpool upon the best models, and the medical men in attendance there had for a long time been agitating for the removal of the slaughter-house from that place in the interests of the health of the community. It was also the desire of the municipal authorities, and of the Borough of Bootle, and it was on public grounds, that he pressed the desirability of the Second Reading. Possibly shareholders in the Abattoir Company might be somewhat prejudiced by action of this kind, but he ventured to think that the public interest must first be considered.

MR. W. F. LAWRENCE (Liverpool, Abercromby) asked if, when the Bill went before a Committee, it was intended to give a *locus standi* to the Liverpool Public Abattoir Company and the Liverpool and District Butchers' Association?

*COLONEL T. M. SANDYS said, he was not prepared to answer the question, but he would do all he could to further the views of the hon. Member.

MR. LAWRENCE said, he was surprised at the hon. Member's answer. He understood that on the notices issued it had been stated that there would be no objection to the *locus standi*.

*COLONEL SANDYS said, it had been pointed out to him that it had been so stated in the notices, and, therefore, no objection could be taken.

MR. LAWRENCE was obliged to the hon. Member for the concession. A few days ago he had presented a Petition against the Bill representing something like 700 or 800 butchers in Liverpool and the neighbourhood, whose interests would be very seriously jeopardised by this Bill. This was not a market merely for meat, but for hay and other things. If it were wished to start a market and buy his clients out, they would on general terms fall in with the idea. What they submitted was, that a great public concern like a large market ought to be in the hands of the Corporations of the towns, and that it was not desirable, as a rule, that a private venture should undertake to supply the public with markets such as these. The proposed new market was situated in the north end of Liverpool, and would by no means adequately serve the whole of Liverpool as the present central markets did, and owing to the distance the butchers would have to order a great deal of their meat without seeing it. The consumer would assuredly suffer by the middleman having to run that extra risk and expense. If it could be said that the present abattoir rather favoured the butchers, it could certainly be said that the future abattoir would unduly favour the mere dealers; and he thought that was another reason why these great markets should be in the hands of the local authorities. As their *locus standi* had been so reasonably conceded he would no longer insist upon the Motion which stood in his name that the Bill be read a second time this day six months.

MR. T. SNAPE (Lancashire, S.E., Heywood) said, the hon. Member had stated that he represented a number of butchers in his Division, but the interests of the community were much more important than the interests of a particular trade. The abattoir at present was was within less than five minutes walk from the University College, the Royal Infirmary, the Lying-in-Hospital, the Liverpool Workhouse, and Workhouse Hospital, and was, therefore, in a very dangerous position for the public health, and though a section of butchers might oppose the Bill, there was no question that the greater number of the voters in the Abercromby Division were in favour of the Bill before the House. The Lord Mayor of Liverpool had told the Butchers' Association that the site was objectionable on the grounds of public health.

SIR J. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale) said, the Bill was brought forward because it was necessary to bring the matter before Parliament, but the best place for considering the details of the Bill was in the Committee. He hoped the Bill would pass its Second Reading without further comment.

Bill read 2° and committed.

QUESTIONS.

WATERTIGHT DOORS IN HER MAJESTY'S SHIPS.

MR. H. BROADHURST (Leicester) had given notice of the following question:—To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, (1) whether the watertight doors of H.M.S. *Renown*, now being built at Pembroke Dockyard, which were supplied by outside contractors and then placed in position by shipwrights, have been found to be defective; (2) whether fitters were then put to work to rectify the defects, and then taken from the work and replaced by shipwrights; (3) and whether he will appoint a Committee of Experts, with a view to the prevention of these disputes in future. The hon. Member said he understood that an answer had already been given to the first part of the question, and he would therefore only ask the latter portion.

*THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. E. ROBERTSON, Dundee): As regards the two first parts of the question, I would refer my hon Friend to the reply I gave on the 11th inst. to the same question put by the hon. Member for Stockton-on-Tees. The Admiralty had hoped that the arrangements made last year would have satisfied all parties. A deputation representing the engineering trade in the country has been received by the first Lord some months ago; the shipwright trade have asked for a similar opportunity of stating their side of the case, and that will be accorded to them. It is undesirable, therefore, that I should say anything further in the meantime.

BELLEVILLE BOILERS.

MR. WILLIAM ALLAN (Gateshead): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether it is the case that Belleville boilers are to be fitted into Her Majesty's cruisers *Powerful* and *Terrible*; and whether such boilers have received a fair ocean-going trial by the Admiralty; if so, will he state in what vessel or vessels; if not, how have the Admiralty satisfied themselves that these boilers are safe?

*MR. E. ROBERTSON: Yes. The intention of the Admiralty was mentioned in the First Lord's statement last year, and the reasons were given in some detail. In the answers to questions during last Session the intended use of these boilers was frequently mentioned. The working of Belleville boilers was carefully investigated by an officer on board the steamers *Armand Béhic*, and *Polynésien*, of the Messageries Maritimes, and his report was very favourable. Belleville boilers have subsequently been fitted to Her Majesty's ship *Sharpshooter*, and have worked satisfactorily in every respect over long trials in the channel and at sea.

MR. G. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.) asked whether the inspector sent to inspect these boilers was an officer in the Royal Navy?

*MR. E. ROBERTSON said, the inspector was an engineer officer of the Navy, who spoke French as well as English, which was not regarded as a disqualification.

MR. W. ALLAN asked whether the boilers had been reported upon by English experts or engineers, and not by a Frenchman sent out in a French vessel to report on French boilers?

*MR. E. ROBERTSON: I have already stated that the officer is a British subject as much as is my hon. Friend. Besides his report, the Engineer-in-Chief of the Navy visited the factories where the boilers were made and reported.

SIR A. K. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) asked whether these boilers had not been used in the Mercantile Marine and been found satisfactory.

MR. R. W. HANBURY (Preston) asked whether there would not be a trial of the boilers in a larger vessel than the *Sharpshooter* before they were adopted in Her Majesty's Navy?

*MR. E. ROBERTSON said the question was one that deserved consideration, He believed that the boilers had been used in the Mercantile Marine and had given satisfaction.

MR. G. W. WOLFF (Belfast, E.) asked the number of consecutive hours during which the boilers had been tried and how often.

*MR. E. ROBERTSON said these were matters of detail on which he could not inform the hon. Member.

MR. W. ALLAN inquired whether it was true that an explosion had taken place in one of these boilers resulting in loss of life.

*MR. E. ROBERTSON said he must ask for notice of that question.

THE TYNEMOUTH WATCH COMMITTEE.

MR. J. WILSON (Durham): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that the legal adviser to the licensed victuallers in the Borough of Tynemouth has been elected a member of the Watch Committee of the Corporation of that borough; and, whether such election is consistent with Sub-section (3), Section 22, of the Municipal Incorporation Act, 1882, which says:—

> "A member of the Council shall not vote on or take part in the discussion of any matter before the Council or a Committee in which he has, directly or indirectly, by himself or his partners, a pecuniary interest?"

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. H. H. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): I have made inquiries in this matter, with the result that there appears to be no evidence that the gentleman in question can be called "legal adviser to the licensed victuallers of Tynemouth" beyond the fact that since his appointment to the Watch Committee he has frequently appeared before the Borough Magistrates in defence of publicans charged with offences against the Licensing Laws. I have not sufficient knowledge of the facts to say whether the section quoted by my hon. Friend has been violated. It is to be observed that that section does not invalidate the election of a Councillor, but merely disables him from discussing or voting upon certain questions. I feel bound, however, to say that it seems very undesirable that a member of the Watch Committee should also act as advocate in the kind of cases referred to.

AN AUSTRALASIAN AND SOUTH AFRICAN CABLE.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether any, and, if so, what, steps have been taken towards carrying out the resolution come to at the Ottawa Colonial Conference that the Imperial, Australian, and the South African Governments should communicate on the subject of the rough survey of a route for a submarine cable to connect Australasia with South Africa?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): The matter is still under consideration.

WATERTIGHT COMPARTMENTS IN PASSENGER STEAMERS.

*SIR J. LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, in view of the fact that ocean-going steamers now frequently carry upwards of 1,000 souls on board as passengers, crew, and attendants, he will consider the propriety of the Board obtaining statutory powers to require compliance with the recommendations of the Bulk-heads Committee, 1891, in the building of all such vessels in the United Kingdom, so as to make them practically unsinkable?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. BRYCE, Aberdeen, S.): The Statutory Committee on Life-saving Appliances advised that a reduction in the amount of such appliances should be allowed in respect of vessels which were divided into efficient watertight compartments. In consequence of the Report of this Statutory Committee the Bulkheads Committee of 1891 were appointed to advise as to what were efficient watertight compartments, and upon their valuable Report the Board of Trade have acted in granting the reduction of life-saving appliances suggested by the Statutory Committee. Neither that Committee, however, nor the Bulkheads Committee recommended—as indeed they had no power to recommend—that the provision of such compartments should be made compulsory. The question of making such provision compulsory is a very serious one, and I apprehend that much resistance would be offered to a legislative proposal to that effect.

*SIR E. HARLAND (Belfast, N.) asked whether it was not a fact that a great many of the recently built ocean-going steamers had availed themselves voluntarily and to the full of the recommendation of the Bulkhead Committee?

MR. BRYCE: A good many have certainly done so. I should hardly say what proportion, but a good many, I know, have done so.

LINE-THROWING GUNS AT SEA.

*SIR JOHN LENG: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to cases in which the hawsers of tugs are broken, or compelled to be cast off, by stress of weather, and of the difficulty of re-establishing communication between tugs and vessels when a heavy sea is running; whether the case of the *Maryland*, the hawsers of which were carried away while towing the s.s. *Loch Maree* off the coast of Ireland, and a large disabled steamer left to drift in the Atlantic, has been specially brought under his notice; whether the German Government are now availing themselves of Dawson's line-throwing gun for the purpose of establishing communication between vessels at sea; and whether the Board of Trade will include line-throwing guns amongst the life-saving appliances vessels are expected to carry?

MR. BRYCE: My attention has been called to the case to which my hon. Friend refers. There is no doubt that in heavy weather the hawsers of tugs are sometimes broken or compelled to be cast off, but the Board of Trade have no power to insist upon line-throwing guns being carried by merchant ships, and no recommendation to that effect has been made by the Life-saving Appliances Committee. I am making inquiries as to what has been done in Germany in the matter, but am advised that a line-throwing gun is not necessary, as two ordinary signal rockets lashed together will effect the purpose of establishing communication.

SCOTCH PARISHES.

CAPTAIN T. HOPE (Linlithgow): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether it is the fact that, after the Sheriff had made his report, upon sworn testimony, to the Secretary for Scotland as to the proposed amalgamation of the parishes of Bo'ness and Carriden, the Secretary for Scotland, while considering that report, had a private interview on the subject with two of the witnesses who had represented one side of the Inquiry before the Sheriff, and thereupon issued his decision in favour of the views urged by those witnesses, without their opponents having any notice or any opportunity of answer.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Sir G. O. TREVELYAN, Glasgow, Bridgeton): I received a letter from Bo'ness asking me to give an interview to a deputation, and I replied that it was not my custom to receive deputations as to the re-arrangement of parishes. I afterwards got a letter written from London from two gentlemen asking for an interview, and I returned the same answer. They sent in cards to me into the House; and I came out and told them by word of mouth that I must form my decision on consideration of the report and evidence, and that I could not converse with them on the matter. I may add that my decision was in accordance with the recommendation of the Sheriff.

DEFICIENT POSTAGE.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Postmaster General—(1) whether he is aware that numerous complaints are made of the exaction of a fine of double the deficient postage on insufficiently stamped Foreign and Colonial letters from the addressees in this country, the fine on a single letter sometimes amounting to five or six shillings; (2) what amount is annually received in fines for deficient postage from Foreign countries and the Colonies, and from the United Kingdom, collectively and respectively; (3) and whether, in view of the fact that the addressee is guiltless in the matter, he will propose to the next Postal Union Convention that in such cases the deficient postage only shall be levied, or, in the alternative, that the fine on a Foreign or Colonial letter thall not exceed 2d., and on an inland letter 1d., in addition to the deficiency?

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. ARNOLD MORLEY, Nottingham, E.): There are people who complain of any charge raised by the Post Office; but the principle now assailed by the hon. Gentleman is seldom attacked by such persons. The principle has long been adopted all over the world and is well understood by the public. It has a most important effect in inducing people to prepay letters properly, and, in my opinion, it is undesirable to relax the rule. The Post Office cannot throw the punishment on the right person without delaying the letters, and the addressees in the vast majority of cases doubtless prefer to receive their letters punctually, and settle with the senders any question of insufficient postage. The figures asked for in the second paragraph cannot be given.

MR. HENNIKER HEATON: May I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman will consider the propriety of reducing the fines?

MR. A. MORLEY: I am afraid that anything in the nature of a graduated scale would be impossible. It would be very complicated and very difficult to carry out.

THE ROYAL MILITARY ACADEMY, WOOLWICH.

SIR EDWARD S. HILL (Bristol, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, whether he is aware that gentlemen cadets, who pass out of the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, after an expensive and highly scientific education, have to undergo a period of enforced idleness, extending over many months, before receiving their commissions in the Royal Artillery, in the meantime losing their Army seniority; and whether he will consider what steps can be taken to remedy this?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Stirling Burghs): It has been arranged that cadets who are not commissioned within three months of passing out of the Woolwich Academy, shall be sent to a school of instruction, receiving till commissioned a certain fixed allowance.

MARRIAGE IN THE ARMY.

MR. R. W. HANBURY (Preston): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, whether any, and, if any, what, steps are taken by the War Office to give publicity, especially among the clergy and registrars, to the rules under which soldiers are allowed to marry, and to the position of married women not on the strength of the regiment, with a view to warning those concerned as to the non-recognition by the Military Authorities of the marriage of soldiers thus married without leave.

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: It is not considered necessary to give greater publicity to the rules affecting the admission of soldiers to the married roll than is afforded by their announcement in the Queen's Regulations. Soldiers married without leave do not have the advantages accorded to those who marry with leave; but no question can arise as to the validity of the marriage, nor would the refusal of leave justify a clergyman or registrar in declining to perform the marriage ceremony.

MR. HANBURY: My desire is that these women should be warned; and I therefore asked whether the right hon. Gentleman will not give clergymen and registrars an opportunity of warning women before they marry soldiers without leave?

*MR. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN: I do not think it would be possible to inform clergymen and registrars all over the country of the men who are not at liberty to marry.

ENGLISH GIRLS AT AMSTERDAM.

MR. J. C. MACDONA (Southwark, Rotherhithe): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that on Friday last a young woman, named Annie Nightingale, applied at the Worship Street Police Court for the advice of the presiding magistrate, stating that she was engaged by a music hall agent of York Road, Waterloo Road, to fulfil an engagement as vocalist and comic singer at Amsterdam, another young woman named Stewart, being also engaged by the same person at the same place and time for the same purpose; and that, upon arrival at Amsterdam, these English girls, finding out that the place they were taken to to sing was a brothel, endeavoured at once to return to London; that they were then threatened by the proprietor, and their dresses and property detained, but money being sent to them they were enabled to return; and whether the Government will immediately investigate the matter, and, if possible, criminally prosecute the agent in London.

MR. ASQUITH: I am in communication with the police, who are making thorough inquiry in this case, and until I am in possession of their Report, I must defer my answer to the hon. Member's question.

MR. MACDONA: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware that the luggage and dresses of three English girls, named Nightingale, Stewart, and Norton, are detained in a house of ill-fame in the Dam Rucke, Amsterdam, by the proprietor, who inveigled these English girls over to Amsterdam under the pretence of being engaged as music hall vocalists, and that, upon finding out the nature of the place they were taken to, these three English girls immediately desired to return home; the girls Nightingale and Stewart succeeded in escaping back to London, but their luggage was detained; the girl Norton, through having signed, under compulsion, an agreement, was detained, and is still there; and whether the Government can bring pressure to bear in such a quarter in Amsterdam as will restore their property to these Englishwomen and facilitate Norton's return to England?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): We have no information at the Foreign Office, but inquiry will be made at once.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS AND VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS.

MR. HARRY S. FOSTER (Suffolk, Lowestoft): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education—(1) if his attention has been called to the recent manifesto of the Roman Catholic Bishops demanding that a voluntary school may be opened at any time or place, and may receive the Government grant, provided that the requirements of the Department are fulfilled, and to the recent Resolution of the Protestant Archbishops' Committee that public grants should be made to new denominational schools where there is at present no adequate provision for distinctive religious teaching; and (2) whether it is the case that according to the ruling of the Education Department, a religious body cannot obtain State aid for a new school in a School Board district without having first obtained the sanction of the Board for the opening of such school; and (3) if so, whether he is prepared to consider the matter with a view to the removal of a condition of things which is regarded as a grievance by the supporters of denominational schools?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Mr. A. H. D. ACLAND, York, W.R., Rotherham): I have seen the documents referred to in the first part of the question. As to the second part of the question, the ruling of the Department referred to has been that of all successive Governments since 1870. The Government are not prepared to introduce legislation altering the Act of 1870 in this respect.

TELEPHONE LICENCES.

MR. HARRY S. FOSTER: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is aware of a memorial or statement issued by the Corporations of Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen, urging that he should grant telephone licences to Municipal Authorities, and protesting against the creation of a gigantic private monopoly being conferred upon the National Telephone Company; whether he is aware that this protest is supported by almost every Municipal Corporation in Great Britain; whether the negotiations referred to by the Chancellor of the Exchequer a few days since are with the Municipal Authorities; and whether he is able to state the present position of these negotiations?

MR. A. MORLEY: I have received memorials from the Corporations of Glasgow, Aberdeen and other towns in Scotland urging either that the Government should itself assume the working of the Telephones, or that licences should be granted to Municipal Authorities. I have also received a deputation representing the Corporations of Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Aberdeen in support of those views and objecting to the monopoly of the National Telephone Company. But I have not received any protest in writing from Scottish Corporations or from Municipal Corporations in Great Britain such as that referred to by the hon. Member. The negotiations referred to by the Chancellor of the Exchequer simply had reference to an arrangement for discussing the Telephone question prior to the agreement with the Telephone Company being signed, and this opportunity for discussion will I hope be afforded on Friday next on the Motion of the hon. Member for the St. George's Division of the Tower Hamlets.

SOLDIERS' UNCLAIMED BALANCES.

MR. HEYWOOD JOHNSTONE (Sussex, Horsham): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he could arrange for a list of soldiers' balances unclaimed to be exhibited at post offices?

*THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. WOODALL, Hanley): I cannot reply decisively to this question without first consulting the Post Office; but, with the figures before me in respect to the last few years, which show the very small sum remaining unissued, I do not think much would be gained by recourse to the plan suggested. The soldier has every opportunity in his "Small Book" of placing on record the names of those to whom his property should go; and, in the case of his death, every effort is made at the War Office to give effect to his wishes. A certain number of men enlist under false names, and it is improbable that their representatives would, under any arrangement, be traced.

MR. R. W. HANBURY: Will the hon. Gentleman say what is the small sum still remaining unissued?

*Mr. WOODALL: The hon. Gentleman had better put that question down.

PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS.

Mr. HEYWOOD JOHNSTONE: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if, where a charge has been made by a Returning Officer for preparing for an election for a Parish Council, which charge has been defrayed from private sources, and no other expense has been incurred by the Parish Council, it will be necessary to have such charge (the amount of which is fixed by the County Council) audited under Section 58 of the Local Government Act, 1894; whether, in such a case, a 5s. stamp will be required on one of the duplicate financial statements to be laid before the auditor; whether the person attending the audit on behalf of the Parish Council will be entitled to mileage; and, whether the rules to be issued by the Board, under Section 58, Sub-Section (3) of The Local Government Act, 1894, will make provision for those cases in which the expense of an audit may equal or exceed the total of the sum to be audited?

The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. G. J. Shaw-Lefevre, Bradford, Central): When the charges of a Returning Officer have been defrayed from private sources and not by the Parish Council, and no other expense has been incurred by the Parish Council, the Board do not consider that it will be necessary that the charge should be audited under Section 58 of the Local Government Act, 1894, and no Stamp Duty would be required to be paid. When a person attends the audit on behalf of a Parish Council the question whether he would be entitled to mileage would depend upon the terms of his appointment, and I do not think there is any probability of cases occurring in which the expense of an audit may equal or exceed the total sum to be audited.

Mr. A. F. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that, at the election of Parish Councillors, considerable expense and inconvenience have been caused in several parishes by one elector alone having demanded a poll under Rule 14 issued by the Local Government Board; and whether he will consider the advisability of altering that rule so as to make it necessary for five electors to demand a poll, in conformity with the First Schedule of the Local Government Act, 1894?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: I may remind the hon. Member that, by the Schedule to which he refers, a poll may be demanded by any one parochial elector as regards many matters of minor importance compared with the question of the election of Members of a Parish Council. For instance, one person has the right to demand a poll with regard to the appointment of an Overseer or Assistant Overseer, or of any Parish Officer, or the Trustees or beneficiaries of charities. Looking to the provisions in the Schedule I do not consider that I should be justified in imposing more stringent conditions as regards the poll in the case of the election of Parish Councillors than in the cases referred to.

Colonel LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping) asked whether the right hon. Gentleman was aware that this inconvenience was felt equally by both parties, and whether it had been found that gentlemen holding the same opinions as those entertained on the opposite side of the House had caused as much inconvenience as gentlemen holding the opinions held on his own side of the House.

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: I have not looked at the matter from a party point of view at all. I believe there have been more cases where inconvenience has been caused by a single person demanding a poll. It is one of the incidents of the election, and I do not think that on account of a case of that kind occurring here I should take on myself the duty of saying that a poll must be demanded by more than one gentleman. I have to regard the question from a purely legal point of view, having regard to the requirements of the Act.

*Mr. WALTER H. LONG (Liverpool, West Derby): May I ask whether, if it should become apparent that a change would be approved of by all classes, the right hon. Gentleman would then be prepared to make the necessary alterations in the rules of the Local Government Board?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: If I found a general desire in that direction I would take that into consideration.

MR. JEFFREYS asked whether during the discussion on the Bill it was not generally understood that five electors would be necessary to demand a poll.

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE: I have searched "Hansard" for any indication to the effect, and can find no reference to the subject.

SWAZILAND.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Boer Volksraad have ratified that part of the Convention of December 1894 which relates to the surrender of Swaziland, but have postponed the ratification of that part which exempts British subjects in the Transvaal from being compulsorily commandeered. In putting the question the hon. Member asked the Under Secretary to inform the House whether it was a fact that the Boer Government issued a proclamation on February 19, taking over the government of Swaziland and threatening with punishment anyone who offered resistance?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I have not seen the terms of the proclamation and therefore I had better not answer the question. The Convention of 1894 related solely to Swaziland, and was ratified at a special Session of the Volksraad called for that special purpose. The Commandeering Convention stands over in the ordinary course until the ordinary Session of the Volksraad; meanwhile the Volksraad, as I mentioned the other day, have endorsed the promise of President Kruger that, pending the decision of the Volksraad, the Convention should be effective for all purposes.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: When was the Convention regulating commandeering signed? Was it signed at the same time and in the same place?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: No; the Commandeering Convention was signed some time before.

THE CORK BUTTER TRADE.

MR. W. O'BRIEN (Cork): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received resolutions of the Cork Butter Market Trustees, drawing attention to the injury that is caused to the Irish butter trade, the staple industry of the south, by the inefficiency of the present regulations for the detection of fraudulent butter substitutes; and whether he can see his way to comply with the request of the trustees for the appointment of an expert official inspector, with power to enter and examine all premises where margarine is manufactured or sold, and prosecute in case of fraud, generally to aid in the production of an improved class of butter?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. J. MORLEY, Newcastle-upon-Tyne): In answer to my right hon. Friend I beg to state that I have received these resolutions, and I am quite aware, as my hon. Friend knows, of the very great importance of excluding from the market those fraudulent substitutes, so far as they are fraudulent and designed to be fraudulently passed off for what they are not. But of course my hon. Friend must know that Legislation will be necessary. I find that there was a Bill introduced in 1892 with the object of partially to meet the same purpose which he desires to meet, but for some reason, which I do not recollect, that Bill was not proceeded with. I will carefully inquire as to what Legislation can be devised that will be likely to pass the House without contention, and will then be ready to answer further questions of my hon Friend.

THE INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC.

MR. J. AIRD (Paddington, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if the Government are taking steps to investigate the cause of, and also to suggest remedies for dealing with, the epidemic of influenza?

MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE: Inquiries with reference to influenza were instituted by the Local Government Board in 1890–91 and 1892-93. The results of these inquiries are given in two Reports which have been presented to Parliament. These Reports deal with the disease in reference to its history and also statistically, clinically, pathologically, bacteriologically, and administratively as regards measures of prevention. In January, 1892, a Memorandum was issued by the Board as to the precautions advisable at times when epidemic influenza threatens or is prevalent, and the

Board see no reason to vary the recommendations which were then made.

Mr. AIRD: May I suggest that the Memorandum should again be suggested not only in the Metropolis, but in those districts where the epidemic prevails?

Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE: I will see whether that can be done.

Mr. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): Have any steps been taken to disinfect the House of Commons?

At a later stage,

Mr. W. R. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston) said: I wish to ask you, Mr. Speaker, a question of which I have given you previous notice. It is whether your attention has been called to the number of Members of this House who are suffering from severe colds and influenza, and whether you will endeavour to make arrangements for Members to secure their places in this House without leaving their hats upon the seats before prayers, so that Members may avoid subjecting themselves in a hatless condition to the draughts and chills of the Lobby and Corridors?

***Mr. SPEAKER**: There are two Standing Orders regulating this question, one which indicates that no Member shall affix his name to a seat before prayers, and the other that if he does secure his seat by being present at prayer time that seat shall be retained during the whole of the Sittings. The hon. Gentleman was kind enough to give me notice of his question calling attention to the inconvenience of hon. Members being obliged to leave their hats in order to secure their seats. I see no objection whatever to Members leaving a particular kind of card, not on the back of the seat, but on the seat itself. That would give a sort of initiatory right to the seat.

OPERATIONS ON THE BRASS RIVER.

Mr. T. BAYLEY (Derbyshire, Chesterfield): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if, before the attack on Akassa by the Brassmen, any independent official of the Crown inquired into the grievances of the Brassmen with a view of a peaceful settlement; and, if the cause of the rising at Akassa is the taking away by force by the Niger Company from the Brassmen the ancient rights of free trading with the English and natives?

***Sir E. GREY**: The attack was entirely unexpected, and no official inquiry had previously been made. As I stated the other day, it is known that the Brassmen, who previously had been in the position of middlemen, and had a monopoly of the trade from the interior, have lost that monopoly by the opening up of the country in the interior by the Niger Company. This is believed to have been the cause of the outbreak.

DISTRESS IN IRELAND.

Mr. J. C. FLYNN (Cork, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received a copy of a telegram from the Kanturk Relief of Distress Committee, calling in question the information furnished by the Local Government Board Inspectors; and what steps does he intend to take in regard to the subject of the widespread distress in Kanturk Union?

Mr. J. MORLEY: I have received the telegram referred to, and have directed one of the Chief Commissioners of the Local Government Board to visit this district and report.

THE ARMENIAN COMMISSION.

Mr. F. A. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is able to state whether the instructions and regulations, settled beforehand by the Powers, as to the rights and duties of the delegates representing the European Powers on the Armenian Inquiry Commission, are being fully observed and carried out on the spot; and if no exact information on this point has yet reached the Foreign Office, whether it will be immediately obtained from the delegates themselves?

***Sir E. GREY**: Several telegraphic communications of the proceedings of the Commission have been received from the British delegates, and the duties entrusted to the delegates were being fully and satisfactorily discharged.

Sir E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT asked whether there was any foundation for these insinuations of want of *bona fides* on the part of Turkey?

***Sir E. GREY**: I have already stated that the duties entrusted to the British delegates are being fully and satisfactorily discharged. I do not understand the question to contain any such insinuation.

ASH WEDNESDAY.

Motion made, and Question proposed,—"That this House do meet to-morrow at 2 o'clock."—*(The Chancellor of the Exchequer.)*

The House divided:—Ayes 160; Noes 96.—(Division List, No. 14.)

PUBLIC BUSINESS.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Sir W. Harcourt, Derby): I wish to give notice that on Thursday I shall submit to the House a Resolution for giving further time for Government business. The terms of the Motion will be placed on the Paper to-night.

LAND VALUES TAXATION BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

On Motion of Mr. Naoroji, Bill to provide for the Taxation of Land Values by Local Authorities.

Bill presented, and read first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 26th March, and to be printed.—[Bill 141.]

ORDER OF THE DAY.

BIMETALLISM.

***Mr. R. L. EVERETT** (Suffolk, Woodbridge) rose to move:—

> "That this House regards with increasing apprehension the constant fluctuations and the growing divergence in the relative value of gold and silver, and heartily concurs in the recent expressions of opinion on the part of the Government of France and the Government and Parliament of Germany as to the serious evils resulting therefrom. It therefore urges upon Her Majesty's Government the desirability of co-operating with other Powers in an International Conference for the purpose of considering what measures can be taken to remove or mitigate these evils."

The fortune of the ballot, he said, had given him the opportunity of introducing to the House one of the most pressing questions of the day. It had been so described by the Prime Minister as long ago as 1886. Lord Rosebery's words were:—

> "You have three great topics as to which you will have to make up your minds in a very short time. The first and greatest is that of Ireland; the second, and one of the most pressing, is the question of your currency."

The question had become much more pressing since then. The House would observe that only a fortnight ago the Prime Minister of France also alluded to this question of the currency, and expressed his strong conviction that the time had come for measures to be taken, in concert with other nations, to mitigate the evils from which all countries at the present time were suffering; and since then the German Imperial Chancellor had expressed the wish that Germany should take steps with other nations to see what could be done to remove the existing and increasing evils. The German Parliament, too, by a two-thirds majority, had just passed a Resolution in favour of something being done for the restoration of silver to its former place. The world had never had before it so great an economic question as that which confronted it to-day in the shape of the Silver question. It was at the root of the great financial troubles in India which had driven a Free Trade Government, sorely against its will, to hamper the external trade of that country with import duties, and its internal trade with excise duties. It was at the root also of the extraordinary fall in prices, which, however gloated over by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was to producers, agricultural and others, an enormous calamity and misfortune, which had plunged numbers of innocent people into ruin, and, besides its effect on agriculture and industry, was Disendowing the Established Church of this country, and, indeed, all whose incomes were derived from the land. This silver question lay at the root, too, of the remarkable fall in the value of land during the last 20 years—probably equalling in amount in Great Britain alone the whole of the National Debt; and he was told by owners of cotton mills, iron works, ships, and other kinds of property, that their property had experienced a like fall. The question lay, too, at the root of the agrarian and anti-Semitic movement on the Continent; of the Australian bank failures; of the glut of unemployed money at the banks; and of the fall in the rate of interest. The issues between the two sides in the contest as to the silver question were in themselves very clear and simple. Bimetallists desired that the monetary standard of the world should be free; the Monometallists desired that it should be restricted. Bimetallists said that both gold and silver coins were good things, and that the more abundant they were the better it was for the people; the Monometallists contended that gold coins were good enough, but that silver coins might be too numerous, and that, therefore, their number should be restricted; they feared lest the farmer should get too many shillings for his produce, and the workman too many for his wages! There were points of difference between the two metals no doubt, but more of resemblance. They differed in colour, but were alike in being extremely rare; that they were both greatly valued, too; and in not a few cases they were also found together. The famous Comstock lode in Nevada, which at one time it was feared by some would swamp the world with silver, produced 45 per cent. of gold to 55 of silver. A mine in Spain in earlier times produced both precious metals, curiously enough, in the orthodox proportion of 13½ to 1. Both metals were alike in being nearly indestructible, and they were also easily divisible; nor could either of them be produced at the will of man. On an average, too, both cost more to produce than the value of them when produced. The two precious metals, gold and silver, had been linked together in the speech of man from the earliest times, and had also been devoted to the same common use. There was a remarkable duality to be noticed in Nature. We had, for example, red wheat and white wheat, both used for making flour. There were white grapes and black grapes, each equally making wine. The Creator had given to each of us two eyes for the common purpose of sight, and two ears for the common purpose of hearing. We stood upon two legs. We were also created of two sexes, which only fulfilled the highest functions of their being by becoming one in marriage. So had the two precious metals been married from the earliest times to form the world's one money. The earliest ratio between silver and gold recorded in history was 13 to one. This was the ratio of the Babylonian Empire. In the Roman Empire, from the time of Julius Cæsar to the fall of Constantinople, it was 12 to one; about the time gold began to be used with silver in England, the ratio had fallen to 11 to one. Thus, for more than 20 centuries, the ratio had only changed from 13 to one to 11 to one. After the discovery of America the ratio widened, and for 200 years prior to 1873 it stood at about 15½ to one. But during the last 20 years there had been a variation in the ratio altogether unparalleled in the previous history of mankind. The ratio which stood for 200 years at about 15½ to one, which moved comparatively little for 2,000 years prior to that, passed in a short 20 years from 15½ to one to what it was to-day—namely, 34 to one! There had recently been more fluctuations between the two money metals in a single year than had occurred in centuries and even thousands of years before. What was the explanation of this extraordinary phenomenon which was having such disturbing and disastrous effects? Could it be explained by quantities? No. The total quantity of gold coin and bullion existing in the world in 1873 was supposed to be of about £700,000,000 sterling in value, and of silver coin and bullion—reckoning at 15½ to one—about £650,000,000. It might be said that the production of the last 20 years had altered it. Between 1873 and the end of 1894 the production of gold was £515,000,000, and of silver—at 15½ to one—£535,000,000, and the result of the addition of the two sums was that there was in the world to-day of gold coin and bullion about £1,215,000,000 sterling, and of silver—reckoning at 15½ to one—£1,185,000,000. Quantities then afforded no explanation or justification for the extraordinary change in relative value. And though in a position of the 20 years silver had been produced largely in excess of gold, the excess was not near equal to what it had been the other way during the great gold-discovery period; and then the excess of gold had no effect at all on the ratio. Obviously it was not in quantity that the explanation lay! All who had paid special attention to the subject knew that the real cause of the variation had been Legislation. A Committee of the United States Parliament appointed to inquire into the matter reported that the variation had been caused by legislation in Europe. A Committee of that House in 1876 came to the same conclusion. Then the Gold and Silver Commission, which reported in 1888, arrived at a similar result. The legislation which effected this change was legislation directed against silver, to dethrone it and degrade it, to drive it from the use which had been its main use in all the previous history of mankind. The depression of silver as compared with gold, and the difference between silver and gold, had been artificially created by legislation hostile to silver. England in 1816 began this legislation against silver, which was to-day proving so disastrous. As the result of a brief discussion in the two Houses of Parliament, the ancient standard of England, which had been silver, was changed to gold, and the metal which was no longer standard was not allowed free coinage and full legal tender, as gold had been under the long reign of the silver standard. The great statesmen of Queen Elizabeth's time, as well as of the Commonwealth, of the Restoration, of the Revolution, and of the Georgian era—all advocated that silver should be the standard, as it had been the standard in England from the earliest times, and that gold should have unrestricted free circulation beside it; but under the counsels of Lord Liverpool, England in 1816 changed her standard and introduced this new policy of restriction against silver. One voice only was raised against it at the time; it was that of the Earl of Lauderdale in the House of Lords. His protest, recorded in "Hansard," is eminently well worth reading to-day, now that the real meaning of what was done then is beginning to be realised. The policy had no effect at the time, because England was saved from the consequences of her rash action by the conduct of the other nations, which, until 1873, maintained equal treatment of the two metals, and kept them in free and full circulation in the world at the ratio of the leading Mints. It was only when Germany made a change in 1872, the United States in 1873, and France between that time and 1876, that the extraordinary divergence between the two metals manifested itself. Practically the two metals were then divorced. There had been many memorable divorces in history which had had far-reaching effects, but never had there been one as memorable and fraught with as grave consequences all over the world—as this! The real meaning of this new state of things he would show by an illustration. The price of commodities bore a certain proportion to the quantity of the precious metals by which they were measured. Until 1873 there was one heap composed of the gold and silver of the world; and another heap made up of the commodities of the world. The price of commodities was proportioned to the comparative size of the two heaps. By closing the Mints against silver and refusing to it any longer its old quality of full legal tender, we in effect took off from the heap of the precious metals the great bulk of silver, except token silver, and transferred it to the other heap, making gold alone the measure of the now swollen heap of commodities. We greatly diminished the size of one heap, we swelled the size of the other. What effect could this have? Every economist said that the key to the general level of prices was the proportion that existed between commodities and money. If there was a large decrease of money there would be a general fall in prices; if there was a large increase there would be a rise in prices. By this new legislation we artificially contracted the money heap and swelled the heap of commodities. In the last 20 years we had seen the struggle, under the new conditions established of commodities to adapt themselves in price to the less money by which they were now measured. There had been introduced a revolutionary change into the valuations of the world, which had nearly doubled the value of the sovereign and nearly halved the price of commodities. This was, no doubt, a fortunate circumstance for the owners of sovereigns, but for the owners of commodities it had been a cruel and awful calamity, and to the indebted, whether individuals or nations, it had been absolutely ruinous. The Chancellor of the Exchequer might be able to laugh over low prices, but the hon. Gentleman could not laugh at the steadily growing weight of the debt which oppressed the Government of India, and compelled a Free Trade and a Liberal Government to throw aside its old principles in order to deal with India's indebtedness. In confirmation of the opinion he had expressed as to this enormous monetary change, he should like to cite a passage from the evidence given by the late Baron Rothschild, of Paris, in 1870 on behalf of the Bank of France before the Conseil Superieur. Said that great master of finance :

> "The simultaneous employment of the two metals is satisfactory, and gives rise to no complaint. Whether gold or silver dominates for the time being, it is always true that the two metals concur together in forming the monetary circulation of the world ; and it is the general mass of the two metals combined which serves as the measure of the value of things. The suppression of silver would amount to a veritable destruction of values without any compensation.
>
> To entirely demonetise silver would mean the destruction of a portion of the world's capital. It would spell ruin."

What had been going on during 10 or 15 years exactly confirmed the views of that great financier. Unless the demonetisation of silver was stopped, and unless we went back to the old policy of equal treatment of the two precious metals and gave them both full legal tender and circulation, this destruction of values would continue to go on. There was the real inwardness and pith of the extraordinary change which had been made since 1873. Prices had rested all over the world upon the broad and comparatively stable basis of the *two* precious metals. In gold standard countries now they stood only upon one. We had revolutionised the old measure of value, with the effect that old prices were being halved. Surely England was not interested in the bankruptcy of the nations that owed her money ; but this state of bankruptcy would fast ensue unless something was done to check it. He appealed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to give his mind to the real position in which this question now stood, to open his eyes to the enormous revolution in values which was being brought about by legislation, to use his best endeavours, in co-operating with other nations, to bring back the happier state of things when the two metals stood at a steady ratio, when they formed one money, and together formed the basis of the prices of the world. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, as Master of the Mint, once had a great predecessor in the same office in the person of the illustrious Sir Isaac Newton, who was Master of the Mint in 1717, and the right hon. Gentleman should ask himself why the system which Sir Isaac Newton found and left, was not good enough for the present day. What was that system ? It was free mintage for both the precious metals, both equally legal tender. This was the system which the great Elizabethan statesmen—such as Cecil and Bacon—which Sir William Petty in later years, which Somers, Montague, Locke, and Harris ; which Sir Isaac Newton—greatest among human intellects—lived under and approved, but which Lord Liverpool set aside. He besought the Chancellor of the Exchequer to ask himself, in view of present difficulties and confusions—all new within the last 20 years—whether the old system of freedom for both metals, and equal treatment of both, was not the wiser and the better plan ? He appealed most earnestly to the right hon. Gentleman to try to do something now, in the day of his power, which would have the effect of setting prices again upon the broad and stable basis of the two metals ; he besought him to help to abolish restrictions, to restore freedom to the world's monetary supply, to restore unity to money, and so to bring in a new era of monetary peace and of industrial activity, and thus earn the lasting gratitude of the present and of all future generations. Never had a Minister of the Crown had so magnificent an opportunity of benefitting the whole world. He concluded by moving the Resolution.

MR. H. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) who rose to second the resolution, pointed out that it laid down the proposition that the constant fluctuations and the growing divergence in the relative value of the precious metals were productive of a number of serious evils. The same view had been recently expressed on behalf of the Government of France, and on behalf of the Government and Parliament of Germany. What were these evils about which complaints was made ? The hon. Member (Mr. Everett) had dealt with some of them, and he proposed to call attention to some others. To begin with he took the trade and commerce of the world between gold-using countries on the one hand and silver-using countries on the other. The volume of this trade was measured by hundreds of millions, and there was not a single man of business engaged in it who would not say that, in consequence of the constant fluctations in the value of silver, the trade was in these days very little more than a mere gamble in exchange. This state of things was by itself enough to command for the resolution the careful consideration of the House. The enormous amount of this trade was not surprising when they remembered that, although it was quite true that one-third of the population of the world at present used gold as their standard, two-thirds still used silver as theirs. Yet it was a positive fact that they had heard in the last year or two some of the most prominent Monometallists in this country declaring that they would see no evils pending in the world if silver were altogether disused as a standard. He would not characterise these views as they deserved, but would turn to another aspect of this question. He referred to the present financial position of our great dependency in India. What was the real cause of the financial difficulties of India? The Secretary of State for India had told them only three nights ago that the cause was the constant fall in exchange, and that fall was due to nothing else than the divergence between gold and silver. For years the Government of India had been imploring the Government of this country to do something to re-establish silver. The Government at home, however, had adopted an exactly opposite policy, and blow after blow had been aimed at silver. The Government had closed the mints in India, thus taking from silver one of the last great markets open to it, and had afterwards imposed a duty upon silver imports into India, while at the same time permitting gold to go in perfectly free. By their own deliberate action they had aggravated the fall in exchange, and now they proposed to meet the resulting difficulties by imposing a tax upon the produce of the unfortunate textile industry of Lancashire. This they did in the hope of extricating themselves from difficulties which they had themselves been instrumental in creating. It was these considerations that induced him to vote as he did the other night, when he voted in support of the motion of the right hon. and learned Member for Bury, as a protest against the whole financial policy of Her Majesty's Government in respect of India. The Secretary of State (Mr. H. H. Fowler) had given them some very startling figures with regard to the loss by exchange in 1894 and 1895, but he proposed to supply information of a still more startling character. The other day he asked what was the total loss by exchange during the last 20 years in India, and from the answer it appeared that the loss amounted to Rx.5,000,000 multiplied by 20 years. Taking the old rate and value of the rupee, this would mean a loss by exchange of £100,000,000 which had to be recouped by extra taxation on the natives of India, for whom right hon. and hon. Gentlemen opposite always expressed such tremendous solicitude.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir W. HARCOURT, Derby) said that the right hon. Gentleman had overlooked the fact that the words "loss by exchange" were inaccurate as he used them, because he took no account of the gain on the other side by the fall of the rupee. The right hon. Gentleman's statement, therefore, needed correction.

MR. CHAPLIN said that he would leave the right hon. Gentleman to explain whether the loss was £100,000,000 £70,000,000, or £50,000,000. There was, however, no doubt that an enormous loss had been incurred through the divergence between gold and silver. It was not only by the Cotton Duties recently imposed that the great textile industry in the North of England had been injured. The cotton industry was greatly hampered and harassed at all times by the fall in exchange, for there could be no doubt that it operated as a protective duty upon goods sent from this country to the East, and also gave to manufacturers in the East an immense advantage over their competitors in the West. Then, with reference to the wheat industry of this country, nobody had attempted to explain away the figures quoted by himself the other night, and showing that, concurrently with a diminution in the wheat crop of the world, there had been a very heavy fall in the price of wheat. What was the cause of this phenomenon? It was likewise very largely due to the fall in the exchange, caused by the divergence of the metals. India was one of our competitors in the wheat industry, and she had special advantages in this competition. An English sovereign to-day would exchange for 20 rupees, whilst formerly it only exchanged for 10 rupees; and, although wheat had fallen in price in this country from 40s. a quarter to 20s., the Indian grower was still getting 20 rupees a quarter for his wheat. They knew there had been little or no change in prices in India, and consequently the 20 rupees obtained by the Indian grower were as valuable to him as ever, and would buy as much for him in India as they ever did, and he was thus enabled to take a gold price for his wheat which would mean positive ruin to the grower in this country. Those who a few days ago heard the right hon. Member for St. George's pointing out how dangerous it would be for a country like ours to have to rely exclusively for its chief food upon foreign countries, would, he thought, agree with him that the matters to which he had just called attention deserved the close attention of the House. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had thought it a sufficient reply to his right hon. Friend to taunt him with reverting to the Protectionist doctrines of 30 years ago. He did not understand how the Chancellor of the Exchequer could have thought that a good reply, for it appeared to him that the Protectionist prophecies of 30 years ago were now rapidly approaching fulfilment. The question was often asked—"Why do these fluctuations in the relative value of gold and silver occur, and what is the cause of the divergence? It never used to occur formerly. Your trade in the East in former days was conducted without these difficulties; you had no difficulty formerly with your rupee; no complaints came from Lancashire about the fall in exchange; and certainly you never had complaints from wheat-growers in this country. What was the cause of it all? Was it the immensely increased supplies of silver which were now produced? Was it the greater variation in the relative amounts of the metals now produced? That was a reason commonly ascribed for it, but there was no greater delusion in the world. If anybody would take the trouble to study the statistics, he would find that the variations in the production of the metals were infinitely greater during all the years in which the relative values remained perfectly steady prior to 1873 than they had ever been since that time. No, these great fluctuations could not be ascribed to that; they must be traced to the great changes in the monetary laws in the United States of America and in half-a-dozen countries on the Continent which occurred some 20 years ago. Before those changes all the gold and all the silver that could be found anywhere in the world was, so to speak, potential money. It could be taken to the mints in any quantity. The mints were bound by law to take it and return it coined into legal tender money at a given rate per ounce. It all went into circulation, and *pro tanto* it increased the volume of money throughout the world. The law had two effects which he desired to note in passing also. At this time population, trade, commodities, and the demand for money were steadily increasing likewise, but the additions to the volume of money readily made by the constant supply of both these metals was just sufficient to meet the increased demands and to keep the general level of prices practically steady for a great number of years. That was one effect. Another was this—that it kept the two metals practically steady, because no one would ever dream of taking less for either of them than at any moment he could command from the mints. All this unfortunately was changed. The mints were closed to the coinage of silver while still left open to gold; and silver, being deprived of these great markets, immediately began to fall, and it fell steadily, though not always rapidly, from that time down to 1893. And then what happened? Why, in that year another mortal blow was struck at silver, and this time by the English Government. They closed the Indian Mint, which was the chief market left, and the effect of that operation was instantaneous upon silver. It fell 8d. an ounce in a single week—a thing absolutely unknown in the whole history of the metal; and there was no reason why, if silver was to continue to be treated in this way, this metal, which still formed the standard value of two-thirds of the population of the world, should not become absolutely worthless except for ordinary merchandise. But it was not only silver that was affected by these monetary changes. The prices of all other things were largely affected also, and prices generally fell to a much lower level than before. Upon this point he was afraid there was not much use appealing to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The right hon. Gentleman had always been a stout opponent of the views which Bimetallists entertained. Personally he always used to think that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had given very little serious attention to the subject, because he used as one of the arguments against them the allegation that foreign nations were entirely opposed to any further conferences or interchanges of opinion upon it. The right hon. Gentleman must now admit, however, in view of recent expressions of opinion on the part of Germany and France, that he had misjudged the views entertained by these countries. He suspected the right hon. Gentleman began to think there must be something after all in the theories of the Bimetallists, and that, as the great monetary changes on the Continent 20 years ago had contributed so largely to the fall in prices, so it was possible, if the Bimetallists were allowed to have their way, they might, perhaps, do something to arrest the fall in prices, even if they could not do much to turn the movement in the opposite direction. That, as they knew, would not suit the views of the right hon. Gentleman at all. Agriculture might be ruined. The House heard what he said the other night. The iron industry might be depressed. The mills in Lancashire might be closed. Thousands of operatives might be out of employment owing to the continual and constant fall in prices. What cared the right hon. Gentleman? Let prices fall. "The more the better," he said, "I don't want to see them rise again." That was the response of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the appeal of ruined and suffering industries. A more cruel, more selfish, more unfeeling reply to the cry of depression and distress surely never was heard in the House of Commons from any English Minister. The hon. Member opposite seemed to think that depression and distress were a great source of amusement. He congratulated the hon. Member on his feelings, though not improbably, when the hon. Member had to appeal to his own constituency again, they might perhaps take a different view of the situation than he did. There were many gentlemen in the House who had a rooted objection to anything which could endanger the existence of the gold standard in this country. He could perfectly understand and sympathise with their views, but there was absolutely nothing in the Motion which of necessity involved a decision or any result of that kind. He was a convinced Bimetallist himself, but there was a variety of other ways in which the object could be accomplished and the use of silver undoubtedly promoted. It would be impossible for him to discuss all the different schemes which had been suggested on an occasion like this, but surely they were fit subjects for consideration by a conference. He would mention only one as an instance. He would ask the House to remember this—that we were a great Eastern as well as a great Western Empire. He could not see why, as regards the Eastern portion of our Empire, we should not join in an arrangement with other Powers to reopen our mints in India to silver, provided they were willing to reopen theirs, undertaking at the same time to give every facility for promoting the increased use of silver in England. There were many recommendations well deserving the attention of the House contained in the report of the Gold and Silver Commission, and if he remembered aright it was the right hon. Gentleman, the member for the University of London, who was himself responsible for making many of these recommendations. He had no means of knowing if, or how far, any proposal such as he had indicated would be acceptable to foreign Powers, but it did seem to him to be one not undeserving the careful consideration of nations who were anxiously seeking for a remedy for many of those evils which had been described. The secretary for India would, he believed, adopt such a proposal as this with rapture. To the bimetallists in this House he believed the proposal would be acceptable, and he really saw no reason in the world why it should offend the susceptibilities of the most convinced monometallist in England. No one who had carefully studied the question could doubt for a moment that it would have the effect of immensely lessening the evils complained of, and if that were so he could not conceive why gentlemen in the House should think it necessary to object to the proposal that a conference should be assembled and that England should join that conference for the purpose of considering this among other suggestions which might be made for the purpose of mitigating these evils. He did hope, at all events, that they should not be taunted as they had usually been taunted in these debates with a desire to tamper with the currency. [Sir W. HARCOURT: That is not my phrase.] He knew it was not the right hon. Gentleman's phrase, but if experience gave any right, then undoubtedly Sir W. Harcourt was entitled to be the greatest authority on this subject, for surely no Minister ever tampered with the currency more effectually than the right hon. Gentleman did when he closed the mints in India two years ago. He thought taunts on this subject came with ill grace, indeed, from the Minister who was responsible for that operation. What was the object of it? The object undoubtedly was to give a scarcity value to the rupee. Yes; but increasing the value of the rupee meant *pro tanto* artificially decreasing the price of everything else measured by the rupee. He had always noticed the peculiarity on the part of gentlemen who held these particular views that if the currency laws were altered so as artificially to depress prices, why then it always meant wise and beneficent legislation; but if by any possibility the alteration of the same laws should have the opposite effect of raising prices, they were guilty of the heinous offence of tampering with the currency. But what was sauce for the goose was sauce for the gander, and if it was right to make the alteration for one purpose, it was equally right to make it for the other. He was painfully well aware that the supporters of this motion laboured under an enormous disadvantage in the absence of the Leader of the Opposition, whose views had been so frequently expressed on this subject, but it might be some encouragement and some consolation to the supporters of those views to learn that he had the authority of his right hon. Friend to say that if he had been able to be present he would have given his most cordial support to the motion of the hon. Member. They who had been supporters and advocates of those views for many years had had very unusual difficulties to contend with; the opposition had been invariably bitter and not unfrequently unscrupulous to the extreme. But, in spite of all the influences ranged against them, it could not be denied that both here and in other countries they had been recently steadily making way. Whatever might be the issue of that debate it was impossible for him to know, but of this fact at least he was absolutely assured, that at no distant date victory on this question would be theirs, because they had on their side experience, justice, argument, reason and scientific truth, and in the long run they were absolutely certain to prevail. He begged to second the motion.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I think it may be for the convenience of the House that I should rise at the earliest moment to state the views of her Majesty's Government upon this motion. I can assure the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down that I shall not be guilty of introducing into this discussion any of that bitterness of which he has complained. I recognise that the question is one of the greatest gravity, and in the responsible position that I occupy, I should think myself extremely to blame if I were to deal with the question at all in such a spirit as that. My hon Friend behind me has greatly assisted me in this discussion. He has undergone a positive conversion on this subject which really relieves me of differences of opinion with him, which I am always desirous to avoid. Until a day or two ago there appeared upon the paper, in his name, a Motion which was headed "Silver Free Coinage," and it stated:—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, an international agreement for the restoration of free coinage and full legal tender power to silver is desirable."

I am afraid if that Motion had remained on the paper we must have fought it out, he and I, to the end. But that Motion has disappeared, and another Motion has taken its place, which is of a far more innocent character. It will be my duty to refer to the terms of that Motion more particularly presently. My hon. Friend gave a very interesting account of his convictions with reference to the duality of metals. I always listen to my hon. Friend with great interest and attention, and I read all he writes which he is good enough to send me. I have in my hand a prize essay by my hon. Friend, which is circulated, I believe, in thousands in every agricultural district, and which is of a very instructive character. The case dealt with by my hon. Friend is one of great distress, like that which now unhappily exists in the agricultural industry. My hon. Friend has been a great student of the history of agriculture, and he knows as well as I do that distress in agriculture is not a new phenomenon. In this prize essay he gives an account—I think a perfectly accurate account—of the condition of the agricultural interest as it was 70 years ago. He says :—

> "A dreadful time of suffering they had then. Farmers were ruined wholesale, land went out of cultivation just as it is going out now, trade in the towns became terribly bad, thousands of men in the villages and towns had to stand about idle, because they could not get work. Wages went down to starvation point, the workhouses were filled with able-bodied men and women, who, not being able to obtain employment, had to go there to escape from starvation. There was nearly civil war in this country in some years between 1819 and 1833."

You could not give, I think, a worse account than that, not even in the present day, of the condition of the agricultural industry. I think my hon. Friend will agree that it was as bad then as now. Yes, Sir, but my hon. Friend had a solution then for that condition of things that he has not now, and it was not Monometallism at that time that was the cause of the condition of things. He says :—

> "The history of those times may be read in the fall of prices caused by the doing away with the old abundant supply of the people's money."

My hon. Friend's halcyon period was not the period of gold and silver—of those two precious metals which established the duality of metals. His cure, then, was a trinity, not a duality, and he gave great preference to a medium of exchange which was neither in gold nor in silver. He says :—

> "As the country could not go on without money the Government took to issuing paper money for daily use. Well, these notes were the money in general use in England for 20 years down to 1819. And it was when in that year a law was passed to do away with these notes that the great agricultural distress of those times began."

And, therefore, the distress of which I have read a description was, in the view of my hon. Friend, due to the return to cash payments in 1819. He says :—

> "The notes being stopped, merchants, maltsters, millers, &c., had to find silver or gold (hard cash, as it was called) to pay the farmer for his produce. As hard cash was not near so plentiful as the notes had been, down thump came the price of produce."

That is the monetary theory of my hon. Friend who produces this Motion, and he gives a most interesting account of his family recollection. He says :—

> "I have heard an old farmer say he could remember his mother, who was the treasurer of their family, wearing a great apron with pockets in front of it in which she used to keep her £1 notes."

Now, that is the substitute for the precious metals, the loss of which, in the year 1819, produced that terrible agricultural distress which my hon. Friend has referred to; and, therefore, I think I am right in saying that his views upon this subject go somewhat deeper than the question of Bimetallism. It is a very remarkable fact that whenever these periods of depression have existed, and existed in a degree far greater, I have no hesitation in saying, than they do at present—in the period between the cessation of the great war and the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1845—the agricultural interest have always thought the true remedy was to be found in the depreciation of the currency. If anyone will take the trouble to read the early chapters in the second volume of Mr. Walpole's interesting and instructive *History of England* he will find that year after year proposals were made for the depreciation of the currency, and even for the repudiation of the public debt, on the very grounds now being industriously spread abroad. There is one circumstance to which my hon. Friend has not referred. During those periods when the farmer's wife had her apron pockets filled with convertible paper what was the condition of the labourer? It is represented to the labourer if you only have high prices of produce you will have high wages. Was that true? My hon. Friend knows as well as I do it is the reverse of the truth, and that when the price of wheat was five times what it is at present the wages of the labourer were 50 per cent. lower than they are now, and a great deal more if you take into account their purchasing power. Happily, in this Amendment none of those questions are raised. I heard the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division that this was not a Bimetallic Amendment. There is nothing about free silver coinage, about ratio, upon the questions which raise an issue between Bimetallists and Monometallists. I am as convinced a Monometallist as the right hon. Gentleman is a Bimetallist, and I am quite certain, without disturbing our personal friendly relations, if we two spent the rest of our natural lives in endeavouring to convince one another we should utterly fail. I am not going to-night to enter academically into the theory of Bimetallism or Monometallism, because, as the right hon. Gentleman has truly said, it is not involved in this Amendment at all. I recognise that this Amendment is one which is perfectly consistent with the view of the Monometallist as well as with that of the Bimetallist. Let us see what are the statements it makes. It speaks of the growing divergence in the relative value of gold and silver. I have never denied that; I do not deny it at all. We all know it; India is a great example of it. Then the Amendment proceeds to say that, if other countries desire to enter into a discussion of these matters, we ought not to refuse to join them. I have never denied that. I have always, on the contrary, taken part in it, and the present Government and the late Government have taken part in it. This question has two aspects which are both equally important. It has an international aspect, and it has a national aspect; and I must ask the leave of the House to endeavour to place before it what are the views of the Government as to these aspects, both of which are raised in this Amendment. The international aspect is one which it is of the greatest importance should be understood not only at home but abroad, and I think the House will feel that the views of the Government should be so clearly expressed that they cannot be misunderstood either in England or abroad. Now, let us see what our position on this question in relation to foreign countries is and has been. Everybody knows that we were engaged in the year 1892 at Brussels in a Conference upon this subject. It is curious enough, and I think it is very important, that in regard to this matter both the last Government and the present Government are equally responsible. The agreement to go into that Conference was made by our predecessors, and the instructions for that Conference were drawn up by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's, Hanover Square. We came into Office practically after these instructions were drawn up, though I was responsible for issuing them. The right hon. Gentleman will admit that they were issued substantially in the form in which he had drawn them up; there was no material alteration. I ask the House to observe what was the character of those instructions. I will read the words, because there has been a good deal, I will not say of misrepresentation, but of misunderstanding, of what took place. What I am going to read is taken from the very report of the British delegates, signed by all, including my hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, who has taken a leading part in this matter, therefore the House may rely on the account being absolutely correct—

> "The Government of the United States, in proposing a Conference, had expressed a wish to Her Majesty's Government that a ratio might be established by the leading nations for the coinage of silver at their several mints."

To that the Government of England declined to accede, they would not enter into a Conference for such a purpose as that.

> "It was intimated, in reply, that Her Majesty's Government would not be able to accept an invitation couched in such terms."

Now, that is a very important matter, because it is the course which the late Government pursued, which the present Government has adopted, and which, I venture to say, every responsible Government in this country will follow: That is to say, they will not enter into a matter which professes to impeach the fundamental principles of the currency of this country.

> "The Government of the United States thereupon proposed a Conference for the purpose of considering what measures, if any, can be taken to increase the use of silver in the currency system of nations."

That was accepted by the late Government, that has been accepted and was accepted in the Conference at Brussels by the present Government, and therefore in that there was no difference of opinion.

> "The delegates were to speak and vote on any defined plan proposed for the extended use of silver, on the understanding that they did not thereby in any sense commit the Government by whom they were delegated. It was of the essence of the questions that the ideas of the delegates should be reduced to working plans, and should thus be subjected to practical criticism."

That was the basis upon which the Government of Great Britain entered upon the Conference invited by the United States. Well, the Conference met under these conditions; and I would point out that it is most important and most necessary that we should know exactly what were the feelings of the foreign nations in the matter. The representatives of the United States postponed the question of Bimetallism. It was their proposal and desire to commence the proceedings by a general resolution:—

> "That in the opinion of this Conference it is desirable that some measures should be found for increasing the use of silver in the currency system of the nations."

What happened? That resolution was immediately supported by the British delegates, Sir Rivers Wilson and the others, in accordance with the instructions which the British Government had given them. Therefore, as soon as that proposal was made, the first support was given to it by the British delegates. A series of declarations followed from the representatives of the various Powers. One of the earliest of these declarations was upon the subject of Bimetallism, and was made by the representative of Germany. I call special attention to this declaration. It is sometimes said, though refuted over and over again, that the failure of the Conference at Brussels was in consequence of a premature declaration by Sir Rivers Wilson against Bimetallism. That statement is absolutely unfounded. The first declaration on that subject was by Count Alvensleben, the representative of Germany, in the following terms:—"Germany, being satisfied with its monetary system, has no intention of modifying its basis." Remember, that was made on the very first day of the Conference, and made in reference to this motion for the extended use of silver. This declaration then went on to say:—

> "The Imperial Government does not, however, fail to recognise that the continued oscillation and the considerable fall of silver are much to be regretted from an economic point of view; and that it would be advantageous to the economic interests of the Empire if these evils could be remedied in a lasting manner. Upon these considerations the Imperial Government felt that it ought to accept the invitation of the United States to this Conference. None the less, in view of the satisfactory monetary situation of th Empire, the Imperial Government has prescribed the most strict reserve for its delegates, who, in consequence, cannot take part either in the discussion or in the vote upon the resolution presented by the delegates of the United States."

That statement represents the instruction under which the German representatives went to the Brussels Conference, and the greater part of the delegates there followed the same course. In fact, England was the principal supporter of the United States upon the subject; but so discouraging was the action of all the other Powers then represented that the resolution was finally abandoned. I will read the words of the Report on the matter. France and the Latin Union did not oppose the resolution, but the Report adds—

> "Although no definite opposition was offered, France and the Latin Union were at the outset, at any rate, disposed to criticism, rather than cordial co-operation, of the objects of the Conference."

That, then, was the first stage of the Conference at Brussels. This resolution in favour of the increased use of silver, brought forward by the United States and supported by England, had to be abandoned in consequence of the discouragement it received from the other Powers. Now, there is another remarkable fact; and that is, that the first practical proposal of a definite character was brought forward by a British delegate, Mr. de Rothschild, with a view to provide for an enlarged use of silver. That proposal was referred to a committee, where it was defeated, principally by the action of France, the Latin Union, and Russia. The majority—that is, the hostile majority on the Committee—while in favour of permitting the discussion of the plan at the Conference, at the same time declared that, if adopted by the Conference, they would be unable to recommend it to their Governments. After this, the project for extending the use of silver was committed to the Conference, but Mr. de Rothschild, finding it would not receive an effective measure of support, withdrew it. We have then, as the second stage of the conference, a proposal to extend the use of silver, made by an English delegate, rejected in Committee by a majority of the representatives, and withdrawn at the Conference by Mr de Rothschild. Now I come to the third stage. It was not until the sixth session that the discussion on the general Bimetallic proposal of the United States was formally opened. It lasted until the ninth session, and the United States delegation declared at the close of the session they would not ask for a vote at all. We know very well why they did not ask for a vote. It was because they knew perfectly well that the vote would have been adverse to their proposal. The state of the opinion of the European Powers represented at the Conference is clearly set out in this Report of the British delegates, and I must, therefore, ask leave of the House to read it, for it is most important :—

> "Certain countries declared themselves frankly as adherents of the Monometallic faith. The representatives of Germany, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway were clear in their declarations that no change would be made in the gold basis of the currency of those countries. Switzerland, though a member of the Latin Union, declared explicitly that she was an unshaken adherent of the Monometallic principle, and the delegate of Austria-Hungary was equally explicit in his statement that his Government had every intention of abiding by the gold standard which they are in course of adopting."

SIR E. CLARKE (Plymouth): Is this a speech of a delegate?

SIR W. HARCOURT: No; it is the unanimous Report of all the delegates, including the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Manchester, the great leader of the Bimetallic party. I have stated nothing in any words of my own, because I think it is most important that this should be the authentic declaration, as it is, of the unanimous Report of our delegates as to the opinions of the Governments of Europe on Bimetallism at that time. The Report goes on :—

> "On the Bimetallic side the lead was taken by the United States. The Netherlands were prepared to join a Bimetallic union provtded that Great Britain formed a part of it and Spain and Mexico were ready to adopt Bimetallism, or other measures which would have the effect of raising the price of silver. No declaration of policy was made on behalf of Russia, though one of her delegates, speaking personally, was an active supporter of the gold standard. The Roumanian Government did not consider Bimetallism a practical possibility; and Turkey and Portugal expressed no opinion. There remained the four States which, with Switzerland, form the Latin Union, viz., France, Italy, Belgium, and Greece. Upon their attitude, to a great extent, the situation turned."

Here I would remark that the right hon. Gentleman, at the conclusion of his speech, urged that a partial Bimetallic agreement might be entered into by States who thought it would be advantageous to them, and, of course no British Monometallist would object to that at all. The Report then goes on :—

> "A partial Bimetallic agreement might have been within the range of possibility had these States been willing to enter it. But M. Tirard (delegate of France), as we have stated above, declared himself opposed to any union for the adoption of Bimetallism unless such union included amongst its members Great Britain, Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia. Belgium, Italy and Greece having announced that they could not take up an attitude different from that of their colleagues of the Latin Union, the result clearly is that, unless an event should take place, which in our opinion is highly improbable—unless, that is, there should be a radical change in the declared monetary policy of Great Britain, Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia—an international agreement for fixing a ratio between the values of gold and silver must be regarded as beyond the range of practical politics."

I suppose the hon. Member for Woodbridge has at last come to that conclusion, because he proposed an Amendment that does not lead to that end, having withdrawn an Amendment which contained it. One sentence more from the Report:

> "The attitude of France was nearly as reserved, although M. Tirard made two very eloquent speeches, the principal point of which was that he expressed himself perfectly satisfied with the present monetary situation in France."

That, then, is the authentic account of the condition of opinion in Europe in 1892 on the proposal of the United States for the establishment of a Bimetallic system. What happened then? After the practical withdrawal of the Bimetallic proposal the Italian delegates come forward with a proposal which amounted to the question, "shall the conference be dissolved or shall it be adjourned?" In this situation the Italian delegate proposed the adjournment of the Conference till May 12, 1893. He said—

> "We know already that in a new meeting there will be no question of discussing principles. Each party wishes to sit in its intrenchment. We must not hope that the Monometallists will yield any more than the Bimetallists. We know that the resolution to be taken must not affect principles. The proposals to be made will be practical or will not be adopted. It will be an agreement between the Governments—a parallel agreement, leaving to each its independence."

That is a most important declaration—that each country was, in respect of its currency, to retain its independence. The Italian delegate then proposed—

> "That the Conference suspends its labours, and decides, should the Governments approve, to meet again on May 12, 1893, and expresses the hope that during the interval a careful study of the documents submitted to the Conference will have permitted the discovery of an equitable basis for an agreement—"

for what?—mark these words!

> "which shall not infringe in any country the fundamental principles of the monetary policy of the different countries."

It was a remarkable fact that upon that occasion the representative of Germany declined to vote in favour of the adjournment for this purpose. It is supposed by the right hon. Gentleman that Germany has absolutely altered her views on that subject. I find no authority for such an opinion. I have read the declaration of the German Chancellor, Prince Hohenlohe, which is stated to be "a carefully drafted declaration," and which appeared in *The Times* on the 16th of February 1895. This is his statement on behalf of the German Government:

> "Without prejudicing our Imperial currency——"

that seems to me to be in exactly the same terms as the statementof the Italian delegate at the Brussels Conference—

> "one must confess that the differences in value between gold and silver continue to react upon our commercial life. Following out the train of thought which led to the convocation of the Silver Inquiry Commission, I am ready to consider, in conjunction with the Federal Governments, whether we cannot enter into a friendly interchange of opinions as to common remedial measures with the other States which are chiefly interested in maintaining the value of silver."

Not a word about an international agreement for a ratio between gold and silver. On the contrary the statement is prefaced by the declaration that the German Government says so much, "without prejudicing our Imperial currency." We have as yet received no official communication from Germany, and whether this change of opinion has taken place since the Conference or not is not stated here. When that communication is made, it will be the business of Her Majesty's Government to consider how it shall be answered. I have no hesitation in saying, as far as I am responsible in the matter, that it will be met exactly as the proposal from the United States of America was met, or as we should meet any friendly Government who should come forward and say: "In our opinion this is a subject which ought to be discussed." That was the language which we held to the United States, and it was the language held by the right hon. Member for St. George's. He said:—

> "We cannot accept your proposal if it would imply an intention on our part to depart from our standard of currency. But if you wish to discuss with us the evils flowing from the depreciation of silver we are perfectly ready to discuss any definite plan on this subject and see how far we can agree on it."

That is exactly the position we occupied with reference to the United States. When the Brussels Conference was adjourned, I stated that if any of the Powers, with the United States, had desired that the Brussels Conference should meet again on May 12, we were perfectly ready to go there to discuss this question. That belongs to international courtesy, because the more questions which are so discussed the better for all classes of the community in all countries. There was one mistake made at the Brussels Conference which ought not to be repeated. The delegates who go to a Conference of that character must be delegates who speak in the name of the Government, and with the responsibility of the Government. It is of no use to send men of opposite and conflicting opinions to engage in academic discussions. The delegates you send must express the opinion of the responsible Government which they represent. otherwise they only waste time, as time was wasted at the Brussels Conference. If the United States, Germany, or France want to know what is the opinion of Great Britain on this question, Great Britain will by courtesy always be ready to express its opinion. I am afraid I have occupied the attention of the House too long on the international aspect of the question; but I do feel that it is absolutely essential on a matter of this kind to have a clear understanding, since there is no country in the world whose interests are so intimately bound up with a stable foundation of the currency as this country. It has a vast income, it has the greatest trade in the world, and it has become the monetary centre of the world—in my opinion, upon the ground of the soundness of its currency; England, which has the greatest trade in the world, conducts it upon the smallest metallic basis of any country; and why? Because it has the largest credit. It was in former days that trade was actually conducted by metal. Metal is not the instrument of trade now, whether silver or gold. It is the measure of value, truly; but that is not what is meant by the "quantity of gold." The quantity, in theory, is this—that the more goods you have to exchange, the more metal you want. But that is not true of the present state of things. If it were, England would want the largest quantity of gold, and yet it conducts its trade with the smallest quantity of gold of any country in the world. It has been truly said that the quantity of gold used by this country has been growing less and less every year. Why? Because other means of conducting the business of the world have been found. And in proportion as commerce becomes more developed and educated, in proportion as nations become more civilised, they less and less use metals, and more and more use other means of effecting the exchange of commodities. That is obvious to all who have considered the subject; and certainly everybody who has arrived at my age knows how much less of metal we personally use nowadays. In old days it was necessary to have gold and silver in the house and in your pockets to an extent which people do not find necessary now. The business of private life is certainly more extensive than it was many years ago, and yet that business employs less metal than ever. But now, leaving the international part of the question, and stating, as I have stated clearly, the conditions and limitations under which the Government of the country will always be ready to meet other nations to discuss this or other matters which interest them all alike, I will pass to what I will call the national point of view. For that purpose I must refer to a very important point—the discussion in 1890 upon the Bimetallic Motion introduced by my hon. Friend the Member for Flintshire, and calling for a Conference to consider the question of Bimetallism distinctly. This I am happy to observe — that these Motions become every year less and less Bimetallic. That is to me a most encouraging feature, though I do not know by what sort of surgical operation Bimetallism was extracted from the Motion of my hon. Friend. The motion of my hon. Friend was very bimetallic. He asked that a conference of the chief commercial nations of the world should be called to consider whether a Bimetallic system could be established by international agreement in the interests of all the nations concerned. It has been said that it is very desirable that there should be continuity of policy in foreign affairs. If so, it is still more necessary that there should be continuity of policy in respect of such questions as this. Therefore, I will ask the House to consider what was the opinion and the action of the late Government upon this subject. The motion to call a conference was met by one whose absence from the House we all deplore, and who was leader of the House at the time—the late Mr. W. H. Smith. It was met in a speech which, for condensed common sense, I do not think has ever been surpassed. It does not occupy two pages of "Hansard," and if anyone chooses to know, in a few lines, the whole pith and marrow of this matter, I advise him to read that speech of the late Mr. W. H. Smith. He was not a professor, but a man of business, who thoroughly understood the bearing of this question. He pointed out what would be the practical effect of endeavouring to introduce Bimetallism into this country. He referred to a statement made many years before by Mr. Herries, who was Chancellor of the Exchequer, a banker, and a man of business—namely, that—

> "Every man who had claims payable on demand, every man who held notes of small or great value, every man who had debts outstanding would, if he secured the amount of what was due to him before that resolution was passed into law, get the whole of his money; whereas, if he delayed doing so, he could only get £95 for every £100."

That is a proposition everyone can understand. I will suppose you have made an international agreement on the subject of Bimetallism, and you introduce into this House a Bill to give effect to it, and a man who has money at call—and there are hundreds of millions of money at call in this country—and he knew that before the second reading or Committee stage of the Bill he could get his money in gold, but that if it were read a first time he would only get it in silver, I think if he was a sensible man, as Mr. W. H. Smith was, he would take it in gold before the second reading, and not in silver afterwards. I will read what Mr. W. H. Smith said—

> "To pass such a resolution would be to inflict one of the greatest disasters upon the mercantile community. It would result in this—that all those who were entitled to demand money advanced by them would instantly require that it should be paid, and in the coin and currency in which the debt had been contracted. Mr. Herries pointed out with overwhelming force that the inevitable result of such a sudden change in our circulation and mercantile transactions would be to produce a panic with absolutely disastrous consequences. A change is proposed to be made, because it would be advantageous to the debtor, but if that is so the creditor has a right to say, 'I will not wait. I insist upon having, while I can, all that belongs to me.' I appeal to hon. Members, considering the vast credit transactions which go on in this country, and the transactions we have with the whole world, to form some idea of the disaster that would result from the desire on the part of creditors to claim what was due to them before such a change was made."

That is what I call a common-sense view of the Bimetallic question, which was reinforced and repeated with the greatest emphasis and extraordinary eloquence, which this House will remember, in 1893, by my right hon. Friend the Member for Midlothian. [*Opposition laughter.*] Well, if you will not take that doctrine from Mr. Herries, the late Mr. W. H. Smith, and the right hon. Member for Midlothian, I have nothing else to say. At any rate, they are good enough for me, and I should like to know who are the authorities you are going to place against them. But in that debate there spoke another authority, who, perhaps, you will not repudiate as such—the right hon. Member for St. George's. Mind you, the motion was to summon a conference to consider the subject of Bimetallism. What did he say?

> "Conferences have been held and very exhaustive reports made, and no result has been possible. We have appointed a Royal Commission, and what is the result? A divided report; and certainly it is not upon any divided report that we have a right to take the immensely responsible step of tampering with the general currency."

I venture to think that every responsible Minister in this country will agree with the right hon. Gentleman, and, in the divided state of opinion, will not attempt the responsibility of tampering with the general currency of the country. There was another Gentleman whose opinion in the debate was, perhaps, even of more importance, a Gentleman whose absence we all deplore to-night—the leader of the Opposition. Now, it is known that he is a convinced Bimetallist, but he was then speaking in the character of the responsible Minister of the Crown—a Conservative Government was in office—and, having made an able argument—and all his arguments are able—he thus concludes :—

> "I feel bound to give additional emphasis to what I have already stated—that it would be folly and madness in any Government to go in advance of the educated commercial opinion of the country. I certainly should think it not far from lunacy to attempt to force on the United Kingdom and the City of London a form of currency which they do not thoroughly adopt and believe in."

Will the hon. Gentleman opposite or any other men in the United Kingdom or the City of London honestly say that they thoroughly believe in Bimetallism? If so, we have the authority of every Member of the last Government who spoke in the debate I have referred to that they would not take upon themselves the responsibility of tampering with the general currency of the country or acting in the face of a divided opinion—

> "to force on the United Kingdom and the City of London a form of currency they do not thoroughly adopt and believe in."

MR. CHAPLIN : What is the date of that?

SIR W. HARCOURT : The speech was made in 1890, on the motion of the hon. Member for Flintshire. The Government objected to initiating a conference on Bimetallism. Just before the late Government left office the United States Government came and asked them to discuss the subject. The first thing the right hon. Member for St. George's did was to decline to admit as the foundation of a conference the proposition to enter on the request that a ratio might be established by the leading nations for the coinage of the several nations, which was entirely in accordance with our declaration and the declaration of the Chancellor of Germany. I know there are people who believe there is a possibility of an international agreement. I confess I do not place very much confidence in arriving at that. Whenever a conference does meet to discuss it—as one met at Brussels—they never come to close quarters with it. They had to state what the ratio was. That is always shirked and set up as a mere detail; but any man who has studied the point and calls it a mere detail shows he either knows nothing about the subject or will not argue it honestly. Directly you come to the discussion of the ratio you will discover how various are the interests of the nations involved. You will find producing, silver-using countries have a clear interest in raising the prices of the commodities they produce. There are other countries which have great stocks of silver that they do not know what to do with, and which they would be very happy to unload upon us. We are the great creditors of the state of the world, and hundreds of millions are due to us by other countries. My hon. Friend is a great philanthropist, and says it is very hard upon foreign countries; but if the countries who owe us hundreds of millions of money could only pay us in depreciated silver, or in what they would like better, inconvertible paper, they would be very glad of such an international arrangement. If an agreement were made, what security is there that it would be maintained? The right hon. Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, enlarged upon that point in his speech in 1890—as I did myself in the Debate—of the danger of an international agreement whereby you would revolutionise the public currency. What would happen if a great war broke out? Agreements would disappear in a moment, and international arrangements would no longer have force. When fighting for existence, and when the necessity for self-defence arises, countries need that great sinew of war, gold—and they will have gold at any price—and your international agreement to declare silver equal to gold would disappear at once. It would not be worth the paper that it was written on. I myself am not willing to place the currency of this country, upon which its commerce and its prosperity depend, at the mercy of any foreign nation. I will not place it under the superintendence and under the control of a committee of foreign states. The policy of this country has been to avoid entangling alliances and European combinations, because we do not desire to involve the fortunes of this country in the accidents which may occur any day, and which may end in a terrible contest between the great military powers of Europe. If that objection applies to political and foreign alliances, in my opinion it applies with ten times greater force to a proposal for an international arrangement in regard to currency. It has been said, and this is one of the great arguments of the Bimetallists, that France alone, of the countries of the Latin Union, was able to sustain the burden of keeping up the price of silver. Well, Sir, if there are countries which think that to be a good system, why cannot they combine to effect that object? If France and Germany and the United States choose to combine in regard to this matter we can offer no objection, but we must be allowed to judge for ourselves what system of currency we should adopt. The right hon. Gentleman has referred to the case of India. Sir, it is the case of India which makes me readily admit that the difficulty of the depreciation of silver is a very serious matter. It was carefully considered by the Royal Commission upon that subject, and there are some words in the Report of that Commission which are a very serious warning, and which the House would do well to take into account. This is not a question simply of exchange; it is a question of the interests of the people of India. Allow me to read the words of the Report. They are most important—

> "Turning next for a moment to the special dangers to India which might result from adopting this ratio, we would remark that, although the Government of India would undoubtedly be a gainer, in so far as the burden of its gold debt would be diminished, yet there would be at least a serious risk of substantial mischief to the people of India. Any change having the effect of lowering silver prices, while taxes and charges remained unaltered, might occasion serious discontent; and if it were seen to be a

> consequence of political action it might create political dangers as grave as any that are likely to result from a continuance of the present conditions. Further, if it be true that cotton manufacturers in India haven been fostered and stimulated by the fall in silver, it would be a serious matter, and certainly likely to engender great discontent, if by an act of the State the manufacturing industry thus created were seriously hampered if not destroyed."

The Members for Lancashire can sympathise with that.

> "Although we have not felt ourselves able to recommend that this country should enter into negotiations with the view of establishing a bimetallic system of currency, we have indicated that we are fully sensible of the considerations which have been urged by the Government of India; and we think that every proposal which seems calculated to diminish these difficulties and to ease the existing situation is deserving of very careful consideration, and that an earnest endeavour should be made to adopt any which should appear to promise substantial advantage without the risk of greater evils. We think, however, that in the consideration of this or any other proposal of Indian Legislation, for removing the difficulties of that Government, the interests of India should alone be considered. While we cannot recommend that the Mother-country should run any serious risk in altering its system of currency in order to assist the Dependency, we think that the Government of the latter should be allowed a free hand to deal with the problem as it considers best to its own interest."

Sir, it was in accordance with that recommendation that we concurred with the Government of India in closing the Mints. The recommendation was, that the Mother-country should not run any serious risk by altering its currency—that is, by the adoption of Bimetallism—and that the Indian Government should be allowed a free hand; and that was the course that we adopted in regard to the closing of the Mints. There is only one other point, and that is the effect upon wages of the creation of high prices by the action of Parliament. It was not true, historically it is absolutely false, that high prices have brought about high wages. The history of this country shows that in the time when the prices were highest the wages were lowest; that has been so for year after year. I have before me a remarkable chart, drawn up by a gentleman in the United States, whose name is well-known in connection with this controversy, of the effect in the United States, where it has been the most marked, of the rise of prices when cash payments were suspended. It is shown that, at the time when prices were at their highest possible point, there was the lowest point of the purchasing power. In 1890 wages in the United States stood very much where they did 20 years before, and prices had fallen 64 per cent. but the purchasing power of wages had risen 152 per cent. Therefore, nothing can be, according to experience, more absolutely false, than to say—although wages under particular circumstances vary from time to time—that high prices have been accompanied by high wages. This is a point which the Bimetallists have never attempted to deal with; they know that, although prices have fallen considerably, wages have hardly fallen at all, and that nominal wages have been largely increased through the increased purchasing power of money. If you are going to enter upon a system of change in your currency in which the people of this country will find that the prices of their food and clothing, the prices of all commodities, are raised, you will, in my opinion, pursue a most disastrous course. Having stated to the House, I am afraid at great length, but at at all events with distinctiveness, the view of the Government with respect to the international aspect of the question, and with respect to its national importance, I may say that I find that this Motion states two propositions from which I am not prepared to dissent. I admit that the fall in the price of silver in regard to our trade with silver-using countries has been a source of fluctuation in exchange, and that the fall in the price of silver in silver-using countries has been a great disadvantage. That I have never denied. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of the population of those countries, but we have not to look at that. What we have to look at is the relative trade of the countries. It cannot be disputed that the trade of this country with gold-using countries is enormously greater than with silver-using countries. Therefore your currency ought to be adapted to the larger proportion of your trade. With regard to entering into a conference with Germany, or the United States, or any other county, so long as our own position is clear in the matter, as at the Brussels Conference, I have never had objection to it. If the Motion, however, was in any way a committal of this country to the Bimetallic policy, I should resist it to the utmost of my power.

But the right hon. Gentleman has declared that the Motion is as much open to the approval of Monometallists as to that of Bimetallists. I am extremely glad that the Bimetallists take that view. I see that there are two Amendments to the Motion on the Paper. The first turns it back again to a Bimetallic resolution, and to that I should be strongly opposed. The second is that put forward by my hon. Friend the Member for Hampstead, and he deprecates, as I should, any step being taken that might lead other countries to think that any change on our part is probable—that any change under this Administration, any more than under the last, in the currency of this country is probable. I am deeply convinced, whatever may be the personal opinions of individual politicians upon this matter, that there is no responsible Government of this country who will come forward to propose a change in the basis of the currency of the nation, under which ever since the year 1816—that is, 80 years ago—this country has reached a point of commercial and financial prosperity which no other nation in the world has ever attained. I have deplored the absence of the right hon. Gentleman the leader of the Opposition, because I am sure he would not have contradicted what I am now saying; and I am equally convinced that the right hon. Gentleman, the Member for St. George's, Hanover-square, when he addresses the House on the question, will speak with an equal sense of responsibility. Sir, it is of the greatest moment that, at the present juncture of this matter, the attitude and the conviction of the Government of England should be known to the House of Commons and to the world—whether we do or do not intend to stand by that currency which, in my opinion, is one of the greatest securities of this Empire. In speaking of hon. Members on the Opposition side, who will be responsible when we retire for the conduct of this country, I have only to say that as they have to deplore the absence of their leader on this occasion, so I have most deeply to regret the absence of that great leader the right hon. Member for Midlothian, who, in 1893, in a speech that no man will forget who had the privilege of listening to it, dealt with the whole question in a manner which, in my opinion, finally disposed of it. Though we have those disadvantages, I hope, at all events, that on this occasion we shall not deal with the question as a party question, and I hope that in the spirit in which I have addressed the House I have not given to the matter any tincture of that character. Sir, I have endeavoured to express the deep conviction I hold on this question, and inasmuch as the motion has been brought forward in terms upon which we can find common ground; inasmuch as it does not commit us in any sense to an agreement with the Bimetallic system; inasmuch as it declares that there exist evils which we do not deny; inasmuch as it only invites us to join in any communication upon the subject, whether in the form of a conference or otherwise, with the Great States of Europe; and, inasmuch as it seems to me that these are reasonable propositions—I shall not, on the part of Her Majesty's Government, oppose the Motion of my hon. Friend.

MR. WILSON LLOYD (Wednesbury) had the following Amendment to the Motion on the Paper:—

> "To leave out from 'that' to the end of the question, in order to add the words, 'owing to the serious appreciation of gold, by which the value of commodities and wages in this country are being reduced, paralysing thereby the commercial trade of the country, it is expedient that an International Conference should be held to consider what steps can be taken to secure a stable currency.'"

He said the Chancellor of the Exchequer no doubt believed that we had a perfect and stable standard. If we had an absolutely perfect and stable standard, they of course had no necessity to join in a Conference at all. But if our standard was not perfect and stable, but was limping and imperfect, it became an important question whether they ought not to ask for a Conference to consider the whole matter. The question turned entirely on the point whether our standard was a stable standard or not. He understood that the experts, who gave evidence before the Gold and Silver Commission, had shown that our standard at the present time was not perfect and was liable to variation. If that were so, they might reasonably ask the Government to do their utmost to convene, or form, a Conference for the purpose of having the standard improved or adjusted.

The object of making a standard more firm and stable was to prevent a further fall in prices. But the objection was raised that those who considered that they knew vastly better than anyone else how to deal with the question, told them that a fall in prices was a desirable thing. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said only a short time ago that he did not wish to raise prices—that the cheapening of commodities had been a blessing to the mass of the people, and to raise the price of corn and other articles would be an injury to the people. That statement showed that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was in favour of a further cheapening of prices. Further fall in prices meant, of course, further cheapening of various commodities, and it was important that hon. Members should consider what would be the effect of this. Was it a benefit or the reverse? He would take one of the largest of their investments—the most favoured investment at the present time, that in houses, The fall in prices would certainly tend to reduce the value of house property, a class of investment, too, which was more supported by the thrifty class of the community than by any other, The value of house property in this country was put at over £600,000,000. In the course of the next ten years, owing to the cheapening of commodities and of wages, new houses of the same class will be built at half the price; and the consequence would be that the 600 millions which the thrifty classes had invested in houses to-day would at the end of that period only be worth 300 millions. Further, this cheapening of commodities would lead to a reduction of rents, and thus investors in house property would not only lose half their capital, but would receive a smaller return on the remainder. Was that desirable? In his opinion what was wanted was a staple currency, a staple standard of value which would obviate this change in the value of commodities. A change in the value of commodities forced down investments, investors lost their property, and the nation was impoverished. This impoverishment of the nation was a very serious evil, and he failed to see upon what ground the Chancellor of the Exchequer defended it. How could it be to the advantage of the community that the savings of the most industrious and thrifty classes should disappear by the simple fact of the cheapening of commodities? It was supposed that the wealth of the United Kingdom was 12,000 millions. Well, if the value of commodities depreciated 50 per cent. in ten years, the wealth of the country would be reduced to 6,000 millions. He would give another illustration. What they wanted at the present time was to develop thecountry and enlarge its works. The Chancellor of the Exchequer several times said he would not like to tamper with the prosperity of this country. But he saw there was no prosperity in this country. It was said that we were not worse off than Germany. He had the returns of the iron works in Germany and Belgium, and they showed that in both cases there was an increase last year in the export of iron. That could not be said of this country—we were not holding our own against other countries. He could quite understand that Germany was not anxious about this question, because Germany was really prosperous. If Germany was in our position she would take an entirely different view. Take the case of a man who bought an iron works. He gave £20,000 for a property that probably cost £40,000 ten years before, and he thought he was getting a bargain. He worked the undertaking, and during the next ten years he found that he made £1,000 a year. But during that time the cheapening of commodities and of wages went on, and when he came to examine his balance-sheet he found that his property was only worth £10,000, because, on account of the cheapness, his neighbour could build similar works for that amount. Therefore, the whole of the return he had made in his capital was swallowed up by the cheapening of commodities. That was the position of affairs that arose from the unstable standard at present existing. The investing public found that a sovereign put into works or houses became worth only ten shillings, because of the appreciation of gold or the cheapening of commodities. Could they in these circumstances expect to find men investing? No, they would stand on one side; and that caused the depression in trade, and, to some extent, the want of employment among the working classes. Take investments in ships. The cost of building ships five years ago was nearly 30 per cent. more than it is to-day, and according to the doctrine of cheapness, the men who had ships to-day and the country ought to be much better off than they were four years ago when iron and labour were dearer. But was that so? The fact was that the men who bought their ships four years ago were out of it altogether. They naturally stood off, and that produced depression in various directions. Then banks were seriously affected in this matter. It was said that the banks had at call 600 millions sterling. But that money must be lent, and the banks must have securities. If the banks had taken proper securities at the time when they lent their money, it naturally followed that, with a cheapening of commodities these securities must lessen in value. It was obvious that the security of the banks must continually be reducing, and that their position must be much more insecure under a currency which was varying and depreciating in value. The banks had a strong interest in endeavouring to obtain a more stable value. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian raised some objection two years ago as to the alteration of the standard of value in this country. He could not see how the holding of a Conference could alter the standard of value, as it would only be to inquire what improvements could be made, and said, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer had also done in the course of the Debate, that if there was any change to make the standard more stable, it would immediately produce a panic, and would cause the withdrawal of all deposits in the banks. But how that withdrawal would take place, or why it should take place, was not explained. The view which the Commission took of the case in regard to any conditions fairly to be contemplated in the future was as follows:—

> "So far as we can forecast them from the experience of the past, a stable ratio might be maintained at the suggested ratio. We think that if in all these countries gold and silver could be freely coined, and thus become exchangeable against commodities at the fixed rates, the market value of silver as measured by gold would conform to that ratio and not vary to any material extent."

The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Midlothian had told them that if Bimetallism were enacted, the consequences would be that Bimetallists, Monometallists, silver men, and gold men, every one of them would call in every farthing they could, and Mr. Giffen had estimated the amount so out at call at about £600,000,000. That was an extraordinary statement, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer had inferred that that would occur—that if they endeavoured to make the standard of gold more firm, stable, and secure, in accordance with the requirements of the country, it would produce a panic among the commercial classes. A more preposterous statement could not be made than to say that at the moment they tried to alleviate the present pressure upon gold a panic would be produced. It might just as well be said that if Birmingham came to that House for an extension of her railways because they were insufficient to meet the demand, everybody would want to go upon the new line in one day. Another objection which was mentioned when this subject was before the House many years ago, was that, as we are a creditor country, any tampering with the currency would be detrimental to our interests. But he could not see how any steps which might be taken to strengthen the position of gold in the country would injure us as a creditor country; in fact, he thought it would have a contrary effect. We were a creditor country to the extent of £2,000,000,000; and if that were so, it was surely to our interest to support our creditors and not to injure them. But if we continued diminishing the value of commodities by having a bad standard, varying in its quality and value, how could we expect to have those £2,000,000,000 paid? As an illustration, investments in Australia, New Zealand, and the United States had gone down considerably during the last four years owing to the depreciation of values, and it was a fact that if they depreciated the value of wool, meat, corn, and cotton—which had happened—the assets would be largely diminished. Hon. Members had told him that their investments had diminished in value, thus showing that the present system did not keep our assets in those countries intact. Being a creditor country he certainly thought they should endeavour to have a more stable currency. One of the witnesses before the

Commission stated in his evidence that during the last 20 years the trade and commerce of the country had increased something like 25 per cent., but that not the slightest particle of gold was available to that commerce, the whole of the gold which had been found in that period having been absorbed for other purposes. That showed that something must be done to relieve the pressure upon the traders. Having increased their trade to such an extent they must have been working under great disadvantages owing to the shortness of currency. It had been stated that the £600,000,000 would be withdrawn from the banks; but how could it be withdrawn? The total amount of gold which the banks possessed in March 1886 was not more than £22,000,000: in fact, the amount they held was not more than 9d. in the £ to meet the deposits at call. It seemed to him, in view of the condition of things generally, and the vastness of the deposits, that the Government ought to take up this matter with a view to the solution of the difficulties which surrounded traders at the present time. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had spoken about the progress of the country, but he did not think there had been very much prosperity in progression. He knew, however, that the Liberal Party at one time had inscribed on their banner the word Progress. That was a word which the Conservative Party should inscribe upon their banners. He had heard it said that the Liberal Party had never taken up a question and abandoned it. Had they not abandoned the cause of Progress? Where was the progress, where was the prosperity of the country at the present time? If he looked at the bank returns he found lower dividends. If he looked at the clearing house he found an enormous reduction in the turnover. In Lancashire the cotton trade was in a state of collapse. In Kidderminster the carpet trade was in a state of absolute stagnation. Six large firms had suspended payment during the last six weeks. Was that called prosperity? As to the iron trade, they were told it was struggling for existence; and as to the coal trade, they were informed that they had to go back years before they found that trade in the wretched state in which it now was. It was the same with the linen trade of Belfast; and the silk trade was almost broken up. In addition to all this they knew that agriculture was in the most aggravated state of depression. To talk about the prosperity of the United Kingdom was really playing with the House. There was no case at all for a Conference on this question. The public could not make out the cause of the existing state of affairs. They were to be told that prosperity depended on the Liberal Party being in power. Then that it depended on cheap prices, on cheap bread, and on peace. They, traders and agriculturists, thought they had discovered the cause of all this. If they had not hit upon the right point—if the question of the currency were not the cause—would the Government tell them what was? They wanted some intelligent reason given—they wanted some enlightenment. He thought the Government of the day should look into the matter. He, and those who thought with him, said there was no progress—that there was actual going back. The Chairman of the iron trade had recently given some figures as to that trade. In 1871 there were produced 11,783,000 tons; in 1882, 21,321,699 tons; and in 1893 there were 23,239,343 tons of iron. Of these quantities there were produced by—

	1871. Tons.	1882. Tons.	1893. Tons.
Great Britain .	6,627,000	8,493,287	6,829,841
United States .	1,720,000	5,178,121	7,124,502
Germany	1,278,000	3,469,719	4,700,000
Other countries ...	2,158,000	4,180,572	4,585,000
	11,783,000	21,321,699	23,239,343

These figures are most suggestive. In 1871 Great Britain supplied, as will be seen, over one half of the whole quantity; in 1882, about 40 per cent., but in 1893 only a little over one quarter; for while the total make for these periods stood respectively—

	1871.	1882.	1883.
	11,783,000	21,321,699	23,239,343
Great Britain gave only ...	6,627,000	8,493,287	6,829,841

the last figures being very significant, as they show a most serious falling off, not only in her relative, but also in her absolute, quantity, whilst Germany and the United States show an increase from both points of view. And yet the demand for iron in the world had increased from 11,000,000 in 1871 to 23,000,000 in 1893, and instead of making half they only made about one third. Was that the progress which the Government wished them to have? It was said we must not do something, because some other Power will not do it. But there was no other Power which suffered like England. The Chancellor of the Exchequer told them that they did not want anything—that everything was right. It seemed to him that he did not look into the facts, but if the Government did look into the facts he was convinced they would not have had the speech which they had had that night from the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He felt that they had a grievous depression, which was cutting the vitals out of their trade. They were losing their hold on the markets of the world. Until the Government of this country believed in the existing difficulties nothing could be done to meet them. The Government were responsible; and all talk about progress as an excuse for doing nothing was a misuse of the word. Indeed, the Chancellor of the Exchequer ignored the fact that this country was not progressing. Our exports were valued in 1874 at £239,000,000, in 1884 at £233,000,000 and in 1893 at £218,000,000. Did these diminishing figures exhibit progress? While our exports were diminishing, our population was inreasing. The figures on the other side were no better. Our imports were valued in 1874 at £370,000,000, in 1884 at £390,000,000, and in 1893 at £405,000,000. The increase in imports was mostly in manufactured goods; and that increase could not add to the labour, the wages, and the prosperity of our working classes. The pressure upon us as a nation was so great that it ought to be looked into; and Bimetallists believed they had found out the cause why the course of trade was against us. Other countries which were affected by the appreciation of gold had discovered remedies and had defended themselves by protective Duties; but we were defenceless because we had free ports and free imports; and so our wealth and our power of export went on declining. The value of our exports per head of the population was £7 7s. 9d. in 1874, £6 10s. 6d. in 1884, and £5 19s. 2d. in 1893. Thus there was a material decrease in every decade. Was that satisfactory to the Government and to their supporters? If ever the condition of our industries was a pressing question it was so now. The Secretary for India said they were all Members for India in their desire to do justice to India; and in this matter the Bimetallists were supported by the Report of the Gold and Silver Commission, who, in paragraph 109 of their Report of 1888, said—

> "Assuming such a stable ratio to be secured, what effect would it have on the evils with which we have to deal? Fluctuations of exchange between countries having a different standard, so far as they depend upon the varying relation of silver and gold, would cease, and the perplexities and difficulties which now so severely beset the Indian Government would be at an end, subject to this qualification, that as far as the burden on the Indian Exchequer is due to the fall which has taken place in the gold price of silver, that burden would continue permanently. In the view of the Indian Government—and upon this point we agree with them—this would involve less danger and evil than the continuance of the present state of uncertainty with the risk of a future fall."

In justice to India we ought to do something with our own currency, in order to remove existing difficulties. The Secretary for India said the Government were reluctant to put Duties on imports, and especially upon imports from Lancashire. The necessity for doing this showed that the Government were in an extreme case. If they were in such a terrible fix that they were obliged to close the Mints of India, that in itself showed that the condition of affairs between this country and India was of the gravest kind. There was a special claim upon the Government to meet a pressure which was so intense in industrial centres. The pressure in India must also have been very great when it forced the Government to adopt Import Duties and close the Mints. A pressure which affected us in this country, our industrial centres, our commerce, our great dependency, the Mints of India, and our trade with India showed that we were in the midst of a great crisis; and the Government might very well be asked to look into it with the object of finding a solution. Let them not go on with their Bills till they had solved these difficulties and found a solution of them. The question could not be ignored; something must be done to relieve the strain; and the House could not be better employed than in finding out how to deal with such a crisis.

*SIR JOHN LENG (Dundee) said, that he had always felt that there were great difficulties surrounding any proposal to establish a fixed relation between two metals, one of which was found in much larger quantities than the other. But any difficulties that had presented themselves to his mind were as nothing when compared with the great and increasing difficulties which were besetting an important branch of industry with which his constituents were connected. He referred to the jute industry. He held in his hand a letter from a gentleman who had been for many years the head of a large firm engaged in that industry, and the writer said :—

> "There is no doubt that the position of all trades which come into competition with similar trades carried on in silver-using countries grows worse and worse. The very existence of Dundee is threatened, and I feel convinced that the currency question is at the root of the evil."

He had also received the following communication from a member of one of the largest firms in the jute trade in this kingdom, if not in the world :—

> "Our trade is being gradually swamped through the advantage accruing to our Eastern competitors by the divergence in the values of gold and silver, in which metals wages are paid here and there respectively."

The growth of the jute industry had been checked, and it was now in a very depressed and unprofitable condition. Many companies were not paying dividends, and their balance sheets showed that they had suffered recently very serious losses. This was owing to the competition of mills in Calcutta, mills established by British capital and under British management and control. No doubt there were natural advantages in favour of the jute industry in India. The mills there had the first choice of material; they were nearer to the Eastern markets, and labour was cheap.

[Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being present—]

*SIR JOHN LENG proceeded. He said that, notwithstanding the advantages enjoyed by the trade in India, Dundee and other places on the east coast of Scotland had been able to withstand the competition until recent times. Now, however, the industry in this country was very heavily handicapped in consequence of the fall in the rupee. Firms in India were practically paying only half the wages paid formerly, the rupee being now worth one shilling instead of two. It was a remarkable thing that wages had not risen in proportion to the depreciation of the rupee. That depreciation acted as a bounty on the manufactures of Indian mills, and the result was an extraordinary development of the jute industry in Calcutta and elsewhere. Since 1882 some large new mills had been built, and old ones had been largely extended. One mill was now running 22 hours out of 24, electric light being used. That light was being introduced into other mills, and there could be little doubt that most of these Indian mills would before long be running night and day, as they possessed the advantage of working under a system of shifts, which was not permissible in this country. The number of looms had increased from 2,400 to 10,000, and the value of the export of jute goods from India, which in 1873—74 amounted to only Rx.200,000, had increased in 1892—93 to Rx.3,200,000. India commanded the Eastern, the Australian, the Californian, and other markets; and was now sending goods to New York and even to Dundee itself. Such a state of things was exceedingly serious. He thought those interested in the subject must hail with satisfaction the intimation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer that he was not opposed to the holding of another conference. It might be some time before that conference was summoned, and, for one, he should be glad if it were preceded by an inquiry at home, in which the facts could be brought out as they bore on particular industries. A rapid development had occurred on this question since 1892. Many new facts had come to knowledge. Opinions were being formed and ideas matured. He regretted, however, to hear that, if another conference were summoned, those who attended on behalf of Her Majesty's Government would go simply as delegates, with limited and specific instructions, and bound to vote according to their instructions. That would greatly diminish the value of such a conference. It ought to be a deliberative conference. The members should be at liberty to form their own opinions on the statements they heard and the arguments put before them. He hoped that, before a conference was held, such representations would be made to Her Majesty's Government as would induce them to modify their views in this respect.

MR. A. B. FORWOOD (Lancashire, Ormskirk) said, that, as an old-fashioned merchant brought up in old-fashioned ideas, he could not but refer to the extraordinary attitude taken up by the Government in this matter. With the greater portion of the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer he thoroughly agreed, but the conclusion to which he came was, in his opinion, dangerous. He feared that, from the circumstances under which the Motion was brought forward, great misconception would arise, not only in this country, but also abroad. That the House should accept a Resolution promoting an inquiry into the relative positions of gold and silver would go far to disturb the mind of the commercial community the world over. What was really wanted was that it should be understood that Her Majesty's Government and this country at any rate were determined to have but one standard, and that the one we at present possess. Otherwise agitation would continue in various countries, such as in the United States, where there was a strong silver party, to restore the silver currency. That agitation was largely promoted by those who were interested in the silver mines of the United States. He recalled the circumstances of the monetary legislation of the Republic, under which the Treasury were required or empowered to buy silver, when tendered, at a certain price per ounce, and to give in exchange silver certificates or notes. The consequence had been a large development of silver mines in the United States, and the enormous accumulations of silver, probably amounting to £130,000,000 sterling, in the vaults of the United States Treasury. These vast purchases of silver, continued over a series of years, gave an abnormally high value to the metal, and he believed that to-day the world is suffering, not because England had a gold currency, but because of the artificial stimulus given to the production of silver in the United States. He regretted there should be any chance of false hopes being raised on the part of foreign nations, and especially silver producing countries, from Her Majesty's Government having accepted this motion, while failing to realise the full force of the limitations laid down by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. With reference to the remark of the hon. Member that what we wanted was more coin, he had always thought that, according to the quantity of the article you have, whether it were money or produce, the value of that article was pretty much regulated. Now if, as was alleged, more coin would generally tend to raise prices, then, of course, there would be a depreciation in the nominal purchasing value of that coin. If, however, every article which we had to purchase was to be advanced in price, where was the advantage of having more coin in one's pocket? It was a new doctrine to him, as a merchant, to be told that lower prices for food were a disadvantage to this country. He had always supposed that the cheaper we could obtain raw products, whether for food or for manufactures, the better for our people and our manufacturers at large. He had always noticed that, with a large supply of produce at a lower price, there was an extensive expansion of manufactures and, naturally, larger employment given to the working classes. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had said that high prices inferred low wages. In his judgment that was not at all a certain axiom. If high prices were the result of a small production of the commodity, then certainly high prices were not attended with any advance of wages, but rather otherwise. If, however, high prices were the result of a larger demand, then, clearly, it was an advantage and a gain to the labour employed. This agitation for Bimetallism largely came from Lancashire, with which he was connected, and from the agricultural interests. The great staple of Lancashire was cotton. The Lancashire manufacturer of cotton found that the workmen in India continued to manufacture at the same rate of wage—payable in silver at its present depreciated value—that he received when silver was nearly double the price; and he inferred that the desire of the hon. Member for Dundee was to influence and raise the value of silver in India so that it should not have such a purchasing power as it had to-day to the native who received his wages in silver. He thought it would be exceedingly selfish for this country to legislate on the silver question simply from the English manufacturers' point of view. In such circumstances we should be placing the Indian workmen at a disadvantage in order to bring trade to our own towns.

*Sir J. LENG: The hon. Gentleman misapprehends the effect of my statement, which was this—that there is and would be no change in the conditions in India, but the change that has occurred has been very adverse to our manufacturers in this country. It would make no difference whatever in the purchasing power of the wage-earner in India.

Mr. A. B. FORWOOD said, that the Bimetallist proposition was to raise the price of silver by adjusting its relations with gold, and to raise the price of silver would reduce the purchasing power in India of the wages paid to the native. In his judgment the depreciation in the value of silver had been caused by the artificial legislation of the United States; and, if they were to give silver a certain relation to gold in this country and make it a legal tender irrespective of the amount, they should clearly be watering down their own currency, increasing its volume, and reducing its value in the wages paid to the workmen, whilst in the end the result would probably be the same. The depreciation of the commodities, in his opinion, did not arise in any way from the silver question, but from the extraordinary over-production in recent years. He was asked how he accounted for the price of wheat. Wheat was not grown only in silver countries, but in gold countries as well. The country which had turned the scale in the price of wheat in the last few years had been the Argentine Republic, and silver did not enter into the question at all, the payments to the Argentine labourer being made in paper, which was the currency in that country. They had low prices in wool, and wool was grown in gold-paying countries; they had the lowest prices in cotton almost that this century had ever known, and cotton was grown in cold countries. Why did these low prices prevail? Because of the enormous crop of cotton which had come over to this country. No silver legislation would have affected the question of whether the price of cotton was to be a little under 3d. or 5d. per lb. What lowered the price of that commodity was the large amount available for consumption. Allusion had been made to the depression in the iron and steel industries, which was undoubtedly great; but there, again, silver did not enter into the question at all. The production of iron and steel was some six or eight years ago increased and pushed by reason of the development of railways and other undertakings in various parts of the world; but the demand had now ceased, not from the question of silver or gold, but simply from the development of those countries by railways having gone on a little faster than the necessities required. At no distant date they should, he hoped, see a good return of business from these countries, and this irrespective of the question of currency. As regarded iron and steel, what demand there was in the world for these articles in connection with railways had, he was sorry to say, gone to Belgium and the Continent, not because of gold, but because of the wages question and the hours of labour. It might be dangerous for a politician to say so, but he was bound to state, frankly and honestly, that he did not think those who instructed the working classes as to wages they were to be paid had had sufficient regard to the difference in the demand for the manufactures for export abroad. The consequence was, that the wages in this country had been kept at a standard approximate to what they were in the good times; and so the competition from Belgium and Germany, where the artisans worked at low rates and for long hours, had come in, had interfered with, and had taken away the comparatively small amount of demand there was for the export of railway material at the present day. The appreciation of gold was a problem he had not yet been able to solve, but he pointed out that in this country, with a gold standard, the bank rate had been 2 per cent. for twelve months past, and all securities yielded the smallest possible return. If this matter was to be settled, or if it could be settled by agreement, why should the nations of the earth bother themselves at all about gold and silver? Why should they not agree to issue notes, each taking a certain number? Money was only an artificial token to describe the difference between, say, a cargo of sugar, and a cargo of wheat. The total varied, but the difference of price was really regulated according to the demand of the one or the other article. The currency was simply a token to describe in their books that which they had, and was not the property which they owned.

*MR. T. P. WHITTAKER (York, W.R., Spen Valley) said, this question was one of the most complicated the House had to deal with, but it seemed to him there was a plain way for a plain man to look at it. Silver and prices had been falling for 21 years, a process, which, they were told, was ruining trade, crippling industry, and giving enormous advantages to our rivals. What had been the effect upon the nation at large, and upon our industries? Were we on the high road to ruin? In 1868, the country was in a very similar position, financially and commercially, to that of to-day. We were at the bottom of a commercial slump, after the great troubles of 1866. In 1873, we were at the top of a great commercial boom, and he proposed to compare the position of the country at the time of that boom, with its position to-day, and he thought he should show we were immensely wealthier, and in a vastly superior position now, than then. We were in a commercial depression now, and the causes of that depression were of precisely the same character as those which produced the great depression of 1866, 1867, and 1868. Between 1873 and 1893 the population of the country increased by less than one-fifth, but during that time the gross assessments to Income Tax had gone up from £513,000,000 sterling, to £712,000,000 sterling. The assessments under Schedule D, which represented the trade, commerce, and professions of the country, had risen from £228,000,000 sterling to £363,000,000 sterling, an enormous growth in the profit made from the trade and industry of the country. The value of the houses assessed to income tax had increased from £89,000,000 sterling to £144,000,000 sterling. The wool retained in the country for home consumption had increased from 194,000,000 pounds to 354,000,000 pounds, an enormous growth in the volume of the woollen trade. The consumption of cotton was now 200,000,000 pounds more than it was in 1873. The tonnage of the vessels which entered and cleared at all our ports with cargoes from our colonies and from foreign countries had increased from 37,000,000 in 1873, that great year of success and boom, to 66,000,000 in 1893. Our coasting trade had increased from 40,000,000 tons to 60,000,000 tons. Another indication of the increased wealth of the country was the amount of money invested. The years since 1873 had not constituted a great railway-constructing period, but the paid-up capital of the railways of the country had risen from £588,000,000 sterling in 1873 to £971,000,000 sterling in 1893. We must have made that money; there must have been prosperity. The increase in the amount of goods carried by the railways had been enormous; and that all indicated great increasing trade. According to *The Economist*, the deposits in the banks increased by £100,000,000 sterling from 1884 to 1893. The increase in the deposits in the Savings Banks had been enormous; the money which people had put into building societies had increased from £20,000,000 sterling to £51,000,000 sterling; and there had also been a very great increase in the money the working classes had invested in industrial and co-operative societies. There had been a large increase in the houses of between £10 and £15 rental, which showed that the working classes were able to pay more rent. In 1869, the number of persons with incomes of from £200 to £400 paying income tax was 78,000, but in 1893, it was 159,000; and during the same period the larger incomes had also greatly increased in number. In the midst of all this increase in wealth, we had been living in a better style, and spending more money, which alone dissipated a considerable amount of our wealth. It might be said, trade was bad. He admitted it. But we had times of bad trade before 1873; far worse than anything we were experiencing now. Why was trade bad? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Ormskirk Division had shown that, when we lent money freely abroad, we had a great demand for goods as a result of our own loans. That stimulated industry in this country, and led manufacturers and others to put down enormous plant. When the loans ceased the trade based on them stopped, but the plant remained, and manufacturers competed keenly with one another to secure the trade there was, with the result that profits were cut down very much indeed. Profits would tend to diminish as wealth increased. As the nation became more wealthy, people had to invest their money in some way, and had to be satisfied with a lower return than they had hitherto received. If Bimetallism would raise prices, it would not increase trade, and the working classes would suffer, because everything they had to buy would cost them more. If they were going to double the price of bread, in order that farmers might grow corn, were they going to double the wages of the working men in order that they might buy it? Good trade made high prices, but high prices did not necessarily make good trade. If high prices were the result of scarcity or misfortune, they would not bring about good trade. But good trade meant an increase in demand, and an increase in demand meant an increase in prices. *The Economist* had recently pointed out that, taking last year's imports and exports of this country, and comparing them with the imports and exports of the previous years, if we had to pay the same prices for our imports in 1894 as in 1893, we should have to pay 30 millions more; whereas, if we got the prices for exports in 1894 which we received in 1893, we should have got only 9 millions more. That showed that the fall in prices had been a benefit to the country this year of 21 millions. Agriculture was, he admitted, distressed. But that was the result of opening up new countries and increasing the facilities for getting the produce of those countries to our shores. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, in a recent speech, illustrated, in a somewhat exaggerated form, the effect on prices of an addition to the supply of commodities. The right hon. Gentleman said that if they made 101 brushes, and if there was a demand only for 100 brushes, the additional brush would send down the price of brushes by 50 per cent. It was undeniable that if the supply of any article was beyond the actual immediate demand, the excess would reduce the price of that article; and certainly it was because the wheat-supplying powers of the world had enormously increased that prices were down. But surely that increase in agricultural produce was a great boon to the masses of the country. Again, it was easy to trace the depression in the iron and steel trade to its source. Not many railways were being constructed in the United States, Australia, and South America. In the United States railways used to be constructed at the rate of 10,000 or 12,000 miles a year. Now that country was only building railways at the rate of 1,000 or 1,200 miles a year. Therefore, there was not the demand for rails, steam-engines, and waggons, that there used to be, and it was to that fact, and not to Monometallism that the depression in the trade was to be ascribed. Again, the East had entered into competition with us not only in the corn trade, but in the cotton trade. We had opened up those countries ourselves. It was our boast that it was our special mission to civilise, educate, and train the backward people of the world. But one result of that policy was, that those peoples were sometimes in some trades brought into competition with us as producers. Nevertheless, he hoped that the object we had in view, and that we would continue to have in view was that those peoples would become producers, and at the same time become additional customers for our goods, and thereby increase our commerce. Individual trades might suffer from this enormous expansion of commerce; but the nation as a whole would benefit by the increase in the wealth of other countries, for an increase in wealth was accompanied by an increase in purchasing power. It was quite true that we were passing through a bad time, but Bimetallism would not help us at all. We were passing through a time of stress and strain, with less suffering and privation than any other country in the world. We could only 'bide our time, with the aid of prudence and industry, until the countries in which we had made investments had grown up to those investments, and then we would have a time of further loans and increased income, and a return of prosperity. Therefore, if we entered into the proposed Conference it should be on the very distinct understanding that we should not give any support whatever to the policy of Bimetallism.

*COLONEL F. BRIDGEMAN (Bolton) said, the hon. Member who had just sat down had shown that we were in a time of great prosperity. Surely, then, there ought to be abundance of employment, and instead we have an inquiry into the question of the Unemployed. He thought the hon. Member would make a very useful Member of the Committee now sitting to inquire into that question. Perhaps Bimetallists ought to be thankful that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had accepted the Motion. But the right hon. Gentleman had made it clear that if we go to the proposed Conference we were not to impeach the fundamental policy of the currency of the country. Why, the Bimetallists felt that the fundamental policy of the Currency of the country was exactly what ought to be impeached, and they impeached it by the Motion which the right hon. Gentleman had accepted. Therefore, it was a disappointment to them to hear the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, which meant, if it meant anything, that those who would represent Great Britain at the Conference would be ordered to do nothing. They might exchange civilities with the representatives of other nations, but they were to do nothing to impeach the fundamental policy of the currency of the country. Speaking for the distressed industries of agriculture and cotton, he contended that the fact of the rupee in India having lost some of its value was one of the great causes of that depression. He knew that Monometallists maintained that it was impossible to have an artificial value of silver, and impossible to fix a ratio of silver and gold, just as it was impossible to fix a ratio say, of cotton and labour. Past experience showed that that was not the case. During the long years between 1819 and 1873—from the time we became a Monometallic nation to the disruption of the Latin Union—the ratio did exist, though it was an artificial ratio. During all that time, through the mere fact that the Latin Union—though some of the great commercial nations did not belong to it—were prepared to coin silver at 15½ to one of gold, silver maintained that ratio in Europe; and it was only since 1873, which witnessed the disruption of the Latin Union, that that ratio had been destroyed. He could give one other example of an artificial value. He held in his hand two coins—a rupee and a florin. The rupee contained 165 grains of silver, and the florin 161½ grains of silver; and therefore the rupee ought to be to the amount of 3½ grains more valuable than the florin. But what was the fact? The florin could be exchanged as 10 to a sovereign; but one would have to give 18½ or 19 rupees to get a sovereign. The effect was, that labour paid in India on the debased currency of the rupee practically received a bounty at the expense of the British agricultural labourer and cotton operative. He did not think the speeches delivered against Bimetallism in any way tried to grapple with this difficult question, and he could assure the House that agriculturists and cotton spinners would never be content until the question was more thoroughly threshed out than it had been by the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

*SIR HENRY MEYSEY-THOMPSON (Stafford, Handsworth) expressed the opinion that the attitude of England had a great effect in making the Brussels Conference abortive. He was acquainted with most of the British representatives who attended the Conference, and he could say, without fear of contradiction, that the general opinion amongst them was that an International agreement would become possible as soon as England realised the situation, and determined to do something practical in the matter. The hon. Member for Liverpool had told them that it did not matter whether prices were low or prices were high, because, if they received less they paid less. But rates and taxes did not go down with bad times; railway directors could not make a reduction in their rates equivalent to the enormous fall in the prices of wheat, steel, and iron; and if there was a fall in other things that fall was not proportionate to the fall in the price of produce. The right hon. Gentleman also put forward an argument which seemed peculiar. He said that, if the currency in India were to be restored to its former basis, on which it existed for 50 years, England would be doing a very selfish thing, and a great injustice to the working classes of India. But he had a distinct remembrance of being told that no injustice or injury was being done to the working-man of Manchester by the fall in the price of silver. If that were so, how could it injure the operative in India to put things back on the old basis? The Chancellor of the Exchequer tried to persuade the House that any reform of our currency would be an injury to the British working-man, and that, when prices were high, wages were low. What was the limit? There must be one, for otherwise when prices went high enough there would be no wages at all.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I said that wages did not rise in proportion to the rise in prices. I did not say that wages fell because prices rose. High prices are not necessarily followed, and have not historically been followed, by proportionately high wages.

*SIR H. MEYSEY-THOMPSON said, that the country was not now occupied with historical facts. It did not matter two straws to the working-man of this country what the proportion of wages and prices was in the past, unless it was to be taken as a guide to what the proportion would be in the future. He could not see any other purpose in the right hon. Gentleman's reference to the past. Was the right hon. Gentleman prepared to argue that if prices were now to rise in the cotton trade wages would fall? There were certain hon. Members near him who would be loth to admit that Trade Unionism had fallen so low that it could not obtain at least a proportionate share of the higher prices. But the most important question of the controversy was that of employment. It was of much more moment to the working-man in this country to be able to get employment than to get a particular rate of wages; and the employment of people in English manufactures was greatly threatened by the present state of things, The inevitable tendency of the divergence between the values of gold and silver was to banish the great manufacturing industries from British soil, and transfer them to silver-using countries, such as China, Japan, and Mexico. The report of Mr. Hall, the Consul at Hakodate in Yezo, one of the islands of Japan, showed that seven years ago iron pipes imported from Great Britain cost $28 a ton. Now, the price in England was 4s. a ton less; but by reason of the fall in the price of silver, the price in Japan had risen from $28 to $40. The Consul added that it was no wonder that the native manufacture of iron pipes was being pushed amain. There was the whole matter in a nutshell. In 1873 four ounces of silver bought £1 worth of English manufactures. Now, eight or nine ounces were required to buy the same amount. The cotton industry was increasing by leaps and bounds in Japan, and that country and China and Mexico were setting up other manufactures merely in consequence of the fall of silver. No question could be more important for the working-man than this of the transfer of the industries in which he had so long been engaged to other countries. There would soon be in the hands of hon. Members three essays dealing with this subject, in connection with which he had offered a prize. One was written by Mr. Jameson, the Consul General at Shanghai; another by Mr. Box, a silk trader in Yokohama; and a third by Mr. Croal, a London authority on the Eastern trade. He hoped hon. Members would take the trouble to read these papers, which were very short, and written by men well acquainted with the subject.

MR. WHITELEY (Stockport) said, that he never heard the contentions of the Bimetallists so caricatured as they were in the speech of the right hon. Member for the Ormskirk Division (Mr. Forwood). The right hon. Gentleman had endeavoured to show that, notwithstanding thousands of workmen were out of employment, the industries of the country were never more prosperous. He said, that a large increase had taken place in the cotton trade in recent years. Undoubtedly that was the case; but to make good the right hon. Gentleman's argument he must show that that increase would not have been doubled had Bimetallism obtained from 1873 to the present time. The development in the cotton trade previous to 1873 was out of all proportion to that which had taken place since. Since 1873 the shipments of cotton goods had increased by 37 per cent., but in the ten years previously they increased to the extent of 179 per cent., or six times the former rate of progression. The *brochure* he suggested—so that hon.

Members might pick up the first principles of Bimetallism—would touch upon the fact that Bimetallism existed prior to 1873. The rates between gold and silver only developed fractionally, although the fluctuations in the output were more than had ever before occurred in the world's history. The work would deal with the year 1873 as the highwater mark of prosperity with many of the industries of this country. As a matter of fact the population of this country was now 9 millions more than in 1873, but notwithstanding this increase the exports of British products had decreased by 40 millions since that time. It was perfectly true that Bimetallism broke down in 1873 owing to the demonetisation of silver by Germany and other countries. But that was not a proof of its inherent weakness. It was due to the fact that the area of the Latin Union States was too small to absorb all the silver, which, metaphorically speaking, was thrown at their heads by the countries of the world. The *brochure* would recite the fact that the Currency Commission, which was composed of the most eminent authorities this country could produce, issued a dual report signed by the whole of the Members, Monometallists and Bimetallists, in which they stated that, notwithstanding the fluctuations upon which he had touched, the system in force previous to 1873 kept the ratio between silver and gold at 15½ to one. Bimetallists did not wish to revert to the old ratio of 15½ to one. They did not pin their faith to any ratio whatever. Undoubtedly, that would be fixed after taking into consideration the accumulated stocks of precious metals existing in the world together with the prospective supply for many years to come. It must never be forgotten—and this point was often passed over—that although undoubtedly the relative value of precious metals was fixed by supply and demand, still the very small amount of the supply of precious metals which annually found its ultimate resting-place in the coinage, was so small compared with the accumulated stocks of money and precious metals in the world, that, as a matter of fact, the supply regulated the demand and not the demand the supply. As a commercial man, he wanted to deal with the argument that Bimetallists wanted to raise prices They were often taunted with the suggestion that they wanted to give a fictitious value to silver and commodities. They did not want to do anything of the kind. Monometallists wanted to continue the system under which a fictitious value was given to gold, and a fictitiously low value given to silver. Bimetallists argued that it was the abnormal demand for gold for many years on the part of many of the leading nations of the world that had given to gold the enhanced value that existed now. Would Bimetallism raise prices, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer had suggested? No doubt it would raise prices somewhat, but he contended it would not raise them to the extent many expected. No doubt there were many commodities similar to cotton and wheat, of which we got the largest amount from gold-using countries, and which were depressed in value owing to the abnormal supply of them. But were excessively low prices desirable? The Chancellor of the Exchequer said yes, because wages had not fallen proportionately to value. Bimetallists could not deny that. In the coal, iron, and cotton industries, wages had fallen. In almost all the industries of the country there had been a fall in wages, but it had not been commensurate with the fall in prices. The Chancellor of the Exchequer must remember that wages were largely governed by the Trades Unions of this country. He would not say a word against them as he had been a strong supporter of and believer in them. But even Trades Unionists would have to bow the knee to economic forces like the laws of supply and demand, and if Trades Unionists were able to maintain wages at the present time at a rate which was not justified by the value of the products of a trade, or the prosperity of a trade, undoubtedly work would be less. He had been very much struck by the remark of a leader of the operatives in Lancashire, who had said that if the cotton trade remained in its present condition, and if wages did not come down, work would be less. Undoubtedly one of these alternatives must take place. Their contention was that Bimetallism might raise prices somewhat, but at any rate it would arrest the fall which must inevitably take place in the rate of wages. There was an old adage that with low prices they never enjoyed prosperity, and cheapness was a comparative quality. He argued that it was better to have high wages and be able to purchase what you want, than to have wages reduced. To give a concrete case in the cotton trade: a mill of an ordinary size in Lancashire, with 35,000 spindles for the looms, would cost about £50,000 to build, stock, and work. Twenty years ago the yearly out-turn would have been £80,000; now, owing to the fall in prices, it would be £40,000. The interest and depreciation which had been 20 years ago £4,000, wages for workpeople £16,000, rates, water, &c., £450, carriage £1,250, selling and warehouse expenses £1,200, and salaries and fixed expenses £300, and that was on a yearly out-turn of £80,000. That was only 28 per cent., but at the present time the expenses would be something like 51 per cent. of the turn-out. What business in the country could stand such an increase in the fixed expenses? Sometimes it was argued that these fixed expenses and wages ought to be reduced in accordance with the fall in the value of our production, but that was impossible in the first instance, and were it possible it would not, undoubtedly, be desirable at present. This was a state of things which prevailed in almost all the trades in the United Kingdom, and certainly in all the textile trades. It had been proved up to the hilt that agriculture was in a ruinous condition. Sir J. Caird had estimated that in 1885 the spending power of the agricultural population was something like 42 millions less than it had been formerly, and at the present time the loss must be much greater. The British Empire was at present a larger owner of silver than any of the countries of the world. Why was it that the Bank Rate was so low, and that the interest on securities had dropped almost to a minimum amount? It was because at the present time there was no confidence in business. Money was being banked and hoarded which should be circulated throughout the country and used in the development of trade. He did not agree with the argument that gold was only an artificial token. In the cotton trade there was at the present time a transference of the trade from this country with its gold basis to the silver-using countries of the East. Was the House prepared to see all our textile trades and agriculture ruined? If so they should continue in their present course. As a consequence of the present stagnation, they were already obliged to appoint Special Committees to deal with the growing want of employment.

MR. LEONARD COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin) said, that as the Chancellor of the Exchequer had accepted the Resolution before the House. The Debate therefore became to some extent of an academic character. The right hon. Gentleman had assented to the Resolution, and he could not possibly escape the significance of that assent. At the same time he qualified his acceptance of it with many remarks indicating his determined adhesion to the creed of monometalism, and he entered into a laboured argument against any proposals that might operate in another direction. The course, therefore, as expressed by him, would be to leave the matter in a one-sided state, and it was necessary that something should be added, if only by way of demurrer, to the position taken by the right hon. Gentleman. He had said that the right hon. Gentleman had accepted the Resolution, yet he did not seem to like it. He certainly concealed his pleasure at it.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I beg my right hon. Friend's pardon. It is a Bimetallic Resolution with the Bimetallism taken out.

MR. LEONARD COURTNEY said, he did not think the German Chancellor liked the result of the discussion in the Reichstag, and he also qualified his submission to the vote of that body; but the Reichstag was too much for him, and in the end the German Parliament expressed a very strong opinion as to doing something in the direction of Bimetallism. The German Chancellor, however, safeguarded himself with regard to the currency of Germany; but they saw in Germany, as in England and in other countries, that public opinion, which, however, he granted might be entirely mistaken, uneducated, and perverse, was getting the better for the time being of the persons who were responsible for the government of the country. It was totally irrelevant to the fact to enter into the argument, however amusing, of the hon. Member for Woodbridge Division in regard to an inconvertible currency. He might also observe that, having regard to the significance of the course which had been taken, it was of less importance to dwell upon what happened two, three, or four years ago. A good many things things had happened since then. The present Resolution was now accepted, but he did not think it would have been accepted, colourless as it might be, two years ago. It would be found if another conference was held that the attitude of many persons and of many Powers had altered on the question, from whatever cause, since the last conference was held. Evidence was brought before them every day to show there had been a very considerable modification in popular opinion, erroneous as it might be, in respect to this question. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, having accepted the Resolution, would hardly be able to get out of his difficulties. For what was the first proposition in that Resolution? It was—

> "That this House regards with increasing apprehension the constant fluctuations and the growing divergence in the relative value of gold and silver."

In presence of that apprehension—that increasing apprehension—they must agree in admitting the desirability of some means of preventing that divergence. If they lamented and deplored the fact of these two metals in their values getting separated from one another, surely they must be agreed in the desirability of bringing them together again and preventing their further divergence. That was Bimetallism. They were all agreed, whatever their opinions as to the action that should be taken, in recognising the patent fact that the rupture began in 1873. If they took the price of silver and gold, or gold and silver, for it was the same thing, they would find that for the whole of the century up to 1873 the price of silver was 60d. an ounce, with a variation never reaching 2d. up or down. The metal, which up to that time had been stationary, had now fallen down to 27d. and 28d. If they agreed that something should be done to prevent the divergence going further, the step could not be retraced. They were agreed, then, not merely that the divergence arose in 1873, but that it was caused by the Bimetallic tie being then broken. In proof of this he could produce excellent authority. Lord Farrer, as strong a Monometallist as the Chancellor of the Exchequer, said he could not deny that it arose in 1873, and was in consequence of the rupture that took place then. Was there any possible explanation of the stability before 1873 as contrasted with the instability afterwards, except the disappearance of this one element? It might be suggested that up to 1873 there had been very little variation in the production of gold and silver, and that, therefore, no cause had arisen to change the relative value of the two metals. Most of them were old enough to remember the commencement of the Californian and Australian discoveries. Gold had been produced in much less quantity than silver in respect of absolute value; but with these discoveries the ratio changed, and instead of being one-fifth it became five times as much. There was absolute dislocation. Gold became the commodity that was produced with great facility; silver relatively fell off. In spite of that experience, throughout the years from 1846 to 1873 the value of gold in relation to silver and of silver in relation to gold remained the same. The experience was one to try a theory and a law to the utmost. The change created by the recent production of silver was nothing compared with the change caused by the production of gold to which he had referred, and yet that change was absolutely impotent to produce any difference in the relative value of gold and silver. He hoped he might carry the Chancellor of the Exchequer with him so far as to say that they would be well pleased if what had been the case before 1873 could have remained the case up to to-day—that, whatever the cause of the rupture might have been, they wished that cause had not arisen, and that they would like to go back to what happened before, so as to ensure some stability and some common measure which should be the accepted rule by the whole commercial, industrial and financial world in measurement of the value of things. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, who, he believed, had as sincere a desire for peace and as great a wish to keep on the best relations with other countries as he (Mr. Courtney) had, rejected the notion of an international measure of value in language which, on reflection, he would be slow to maintain. The right hon. Gentleman was in favour of isolation: he wanted a system peculiar to this country; he did not wish to be entangled in conventions. By that he meant that he did not wish this country to enter into relations with the other countries of the world which would bind us, in however small a measure, with the bonds of perpetual peace. For his part he gloried in the establishment of an international measure of value which would tie nations more closely together. This divergence between gold and silver was producing great economic harm. Take the case of our relations with silver-using countries. Here we had a gold standard; there they had a silver standard; and the two standards were moving in different directions. In consequence of the change and of gold having been preferred in many countries where it had not been before an exclusive object of desire, that metal had become more sought after, and silver had become less sought after—quite apart from the changes which had happened owing to what might be called the natural conditions of production—and the one had become dearer and the other cheaper. The consequence was, that in all industries where there happened to be competition between a gold-using country and a silver-using country the competition was aggravated and made sharper by these changes. He did not ignore those great conditions of competition which had affected, and must affect very materially, the position of this country in the industrial rivalry of the world. When he saw the circle of our industrial competition being reduced in its circumference, and our effective contest with the rest of the world being brought within narrower limits, from causes absolutely simple and natural and independent of law, he confessed he sometimes felt a very severe anxiety as to the future of this country. But this rupture of which they had spoken and the consequences which had flowed from it were aggravating that competition. There was a friction which could not be easily got over in industrial communities in bringing the relations of industrial life into harmony with the new state of things; and if they had a silver standard in one country and silver getting cheaper, and a gold standard in another country and gold getting dearer, it was with difficulty that they brought the industrial relations within each country under the correcting influences which in the process of time no doubt would operate so as to correct these two differences of standard. If they did not alter the standard matters might come right after a generation, but it was possible that before that time had elapsed our industries would have gone altogether, and in the meantime the country would be suffering from a competition which would not be the competition arising from the better conditions of production elsewhere. Then, again, there was another question. Gold was becoming dearer in consequence of this increased demand for it from year to year, and there was a constant increase in the value of money and in the pressure of debts as compared with the value of things. The effect of the change was to make mortgages heavier whilst the things mortgaged declined, and to make charges more onerous. The consequence was a continual grating of the industrial machine. Every process was made more and more scant and more and more contracted when a man knew that he was going to produce something which would not bring him back as much next week as he could have got for it last month. Our industries were suffering severely from the continued hardening and deepening of the standard at home. Not only had we to face international difficulties, but we had difficulties at home in connection with this matter, as was always the case when things were getting cheaper and money was becoming dearer. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had said to-night what he had said on a former occasion about high prices. But high prices did not mean high wages. We had had high prices with low wages and high prices with high wages. In 1872 and 1873 there were periods of high prices and high wages therewith. Perhaps he should enter into a too contentious matter if he went back to the experiences of Europe in the sixteenth century, when there were great changes in prices, which went up highly, and when, as he believed, the industrial condition of the people was immensely improved; but we had nothing left after that time but misery and a survival of the worst things which occurred when the industrial community was at its lowest. Coming to a later time, when the Australian and Californian gold discoveries were very operative they produced a considerable rise in prices. Those were years of prosperity. There were black times in them, no doubt; but, on the whole, there were years of great and growing industries, not because prices rose, but because the conditions of production were such as to encourage the manufacturer to go into larger spheres of labour. That was a period of industrial encouragement and activity. They should have to alter in some way the organisation of the conference as far as this country was concerned. It would scarcely do again to send gentlemen to speak against one another. They must have some expression of the national mind. They must have some different instructions given to them, and his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer seemed to recognise that, although no argument would convince him, a confirmed Monometallist. They must have some liberty, some encouragement to keep their minds open, not to put down their foot too strongly, but to keep themselves in constant communication with those at home. He should only say one word in conclusion. He could assure his right hon. Friend that he was jealous of any action which would give any advantage to any person or set of persons who attempted to establish a corner in silver. He looked at this matter as one affecting the whole industrial organisation of the nation—nay, more, as affecting the industrial organisation of the world—not touching this country alone. He wanted to realise something greater than a national benefit. He wanted to realise some great measure of value which would be another link binding nations together in an industrial and civil union.

*SIR FRANCIS H. EVANS (Southampton) thought they should be extremely careful before they adopted any suggestion which would affect the good credit they had built up. In suggesting that it was Bimetallism that saved us from difficulties between 1846 and 1873, the right hon. Gentleman was quite mistaken. The growth of our trade in those years was due to the terrible destruction of war. First we had the destructive war in the Crimea; and it was followed, as all wars are, by feverish activity. Then there was the Civil War in America, and that was followed by unequalled feverish activity all over the States. Steel and iron went up from £6 to £15 and £16 a ton; wages were high; everything was high; and the natural result ensued—there was universal collapse in America. The Bimetallic movement was created in and drew its strength from the United States. If you left Mexico with $3 and entered the United States you got $2 for the three, although the Mexican dollar was of greater intrinsic value than the United States dollar. It was impossible for any country to go on from year to year keeping its silver at that unreal value without having to pay the bill. A demand was made for a ratio of about 15½ to one; if this were established England would become a dumping ground for silver and the gold would go away. The United States owing an immense debt to this country in sterling, would pay in silver instead of gold. Mexico was prosperous because it had so little sterling indebtedness. The trouble of other countries was due to their debts in sterling. That was the case of India.

It was the common trouble of people who could not pay their debts. He should like to see any Member of the House addressing meetings at Johannesburg and advising the people there to adopt a double standard; if the right hon. Member for Bodmin did it he would come back a wiser and perhaps a sadder man. The supporters of Bimetallism were those who wanted to pay their debts at less than their full value: it was that desire which lay at the bottom of the agitation. Much of our depression would remain so long as competition was assailed by the lower cost of labour in other countries. He hoped this country would never lower its credit merely to meet a temporary depression.

*SIR G. CHESNEY (Oxford) said, the House was to be congratulated on the advance which this question had made in the last year or two. The movement had had to encounter all the old weapons with which erroneous positions had been defended in the past. Only a few years ago he recollected that in a certain Society of repute—the Political Economy Club—a Society for the discussion of economic doctrine, of the members of that Society he believed he was the only member who professed the doctrine of Bimetallism. He could also remember a discussion at that time wherein a gentleman of considerable standing in the monetary world propounded three remedies for certain financial difficulties under which India at that time was labouring, and he proceeded to state two of those remedies. Then the speaker stopped, and one of the listeners observed to him: "You have not told us what your third remedy is." The speaker replied: "I really forget what my third remedy was. Oh yes, I recollect, it was Bimetallism!" whereupon the company laughed. This was the way in which the doctrine of Bimetallism was received 16 or 17 years ago. On returning to that institution after the lapse of some years passed abroad he found that almost the whole of the members had been converted to the doctrine of Bimetallism, only one or two Monometallists remained. He called the attention of the House to this remarkable circumstance, that the younger generation of economists, the writers and thinkers on this class of questions, were one and all Bimetallists. He might, indeed, say that the belief was almost universal; there were, of course, one or two exceptions which were just sufficient to accentuate the importance of the change which had passed over public opinion. It was only natural that the older professors of any doctrine, when they found that the world which had been accustomed to look to them for their opinions was passing over them and following the opinions of younger men, should still maintain with a certain degree of obstinacy the exploded opinions which they still held. He asserted that at the present time the thinking world was divided into two classes—the persons who understood the subject and the persons who did not. The persons who understood the subject were all Bimetallists; and, what was still more satisfactory, all the persons who did not understand it were all coming over to the Bimetallic theory. The people with little leisure or opportunity to master such subjects naturally took their opinions from those who were well qualified to speak with authority. They were not, perhaps, able to follow the proof that the earth revolved round the sun, and that it was not the sun that revolved round the earth; but when it was observed that the mathematicians and physicists were satisfied on this point, the rest of the world were prepared to accept the fact as certain. So it was with Bimetallism. The moneyed classes, the bankers, and others were all coming round to the Bimetallic theory, and were giving the greatest support to it. He would defy anyone to show in the literature now published against Bimetallism anything that deserved serious reply. No doubt hon. Members might have seen treatises at different times, say, to establish the squaring of the circle. If any hon. Member had an opportunity of reading those eccentricities of literature he would find that the author invariably started by assuming the point he had to prove, and then triumphantly proceeded to his conclusion. It was the same with all the treatises on Monometallism. The other day he saw in a leading magazine an article by a gentleman of considerable weight and authority on the subject. In the most artless and ingenuous manner this gentleman assumed in the very first paragraph the theory which he set out to establish; and then he passed on to apply it. There were also, naturally, among those who would not follow a subject occasional instances of persons who would not take the trouble to inquire into it, and who preferred to adhere to their old views. When one heard the right hon. Member for Midlothian tell the House in a debate not long ago that he adhered to Monometallism because the value of gold never altered its standard, one could only regret that the right hon. Gentleman had not been able to spare time to master the elementary principle of the question. So, when the Chancellor of the Exchequer told the House that gold was a very good thing for some countries and silver for other countries, that each should be satisfied with its own currency, and that he would have no share in putting forward currency nostrums, one was reminded of a character in the well-known play of *La Malade imaginaire* of Molière. Hon. Members would recollect that in that play there was a certain Monsieur Diafoirus, who introduced his son, Dr. Thomas Diafoirus, as a suitor for the heroine. The father said :—

> "What I particularly admire in my son Thomas—in which he resembles me—is that he is blindly devoted to the prejudices of our forefathers, and nothing would induce him to listen to the reason or the proofs of such dogmas as the pretended theory of the circulation of the blood, or stuff of that kind."

Sir G. Chesney.

When they heard the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer say he would have nothing to do with Bimetallic experiments, it might be supposed that he too was blindly attached to the opinions of his forefathers; but as Dr. Diafoirus no doubt became eventually a convert to the theory of the circulation of the blood, so he hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would become a convert to Bimetallism, and give the great benefit of his powers and his wit to advance that most useful change. He thought the prospects of Bimetallism were never better than they were at the present time, and he was convinced that when it came, the greatest possible benefit would result to the people of this country. All other questions of the Franchise and so forth were insignificant when compared with this great question of putting the currency of the world on a sound basis. There was one consideration he desired to offer. It was sometimes said, and there was some truth in it, that if Bimetallism was so good a thing for England, which had a gold standard, how could it be a good thing for India, which had a silver standard. Undoubtedly the country which suffered most from the present state of things was England, and certainly what England had lost India had in one way gained. And if India were self-contained and as independent of other states as China, then it might be left to go its own ways with all the advantages of the silver standard; but that was not the position. India was hampered and bound, and her Government was bound, by her enormous gold debt, which was so enormously enhanced by having to be paid in silver. India, moreover, was a very poor country and in want of capital. If there was one thing India required at the present time it was a further extension of her railways, but so long as the question of the currency remained unsettled it was hopeless to think that English capital would be forthcoming. Perhaps the worst result the depression in her currency was the uncertainty of the ratio from day to day, which at the present time was completely paralysing trade. While things remained as they were it could not be otherwise than that the financial position and trade of India should be thrown into confusion. He thought they might all regard the Resolution which had been agreed to that night with hopefulness and satisfaction, as the first step towards this great and much needed reform.

*SIR S. MONTAGU (Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel) desired to say a few words on this currency question, in which he had always taken a deep interest. He was in favour of the full use of silver united with gold long before the awkward title of Bimetallism was invented. He had always thought that the world's commerce could not be conducted on a sound and profitable basis supported by one of those metals only, or even by both metals unless tied together. Our former commercial prosperity, which had progressed by leaps and bounds, had been succeeded by a halting unsteadiness, through which our trade was deteriorating and our traders degenerating into speculators. Silver was absolutely necessary as a circulating medium, and could not be conveniently replaced by any other metal or by bank notes. Therefore, every nation was interested in maintaining its gold value. Our Empire contained a greater quantity of silver than any other country. Silver was largely produced in our Australian Colonies, therefore we should welcome any reasonable plan for rendering it a stable and realisable asset. Was that the case now in India or elsewhere? He thought not. Other Powers held large quantities of unsaleable silver against which bank notes were circulating to an enormous extent. It might be said that that was a danger with which we had no concern—let other countries take up silver or discard it, just as they pleased, we were devoted to gold, and would have nothing to do with the inferior metal. Was that good policy? Was it not the fact that we were largely interested in every commercial country, and if any great difficulty occurred, say in the United States, we had a reflex action at home. If our Government thought that the restoration of Bimetallism or the rehabilitation of silver by other means would do no good, he would ask them this question, had not the suspension of Bimetallism been an unmitigated evil? Was not every country the worse for the depreciation of silver? The United States and Mexico were notable examples. Was India better off? Her export trade had been stimulated, and even gold in large quantities had been exported. But what was her real financial position? It was most unsatisfactory. The burden of interest on her gold debts and the burden of her home charges had nearly doubled. Hence the imposition of Import Duties, which, although paid mainly by the people of India, injured trade unquestionably. The Secretary of State for India told the House last Thursday that the decline in the value of the rupee from 14d. to 13d entailed a loss of Rx.2,500,000. Had the Indian Mints not been, closed and a Duty imposed on silver, what would be the present position? The price of silver was now 27½d., equivalent to 10½d. per rupee, and consequently the further loss to India would have been 2½d. per rupee, or over Rx.7,000,000. Of course, if the recent policy were reversed, silver might rise somewhat, but there are large stocks of uncoined silver in India and elsewhere; we might safely estimate the further loss at Rx.5,000,0000 or 6,000,000. The action of the Indian Government was a wise precaution and was justified by the result. We could now offer a tangible concession to other Powers should they desire to rehabilitate silver. We could offer in certain circumstances to re-open the Indian Mints and to take off the Import Duty on silver. The other Import Duties would also, of course, be abolished in consequence of the improved value of the rupee. He wished the Government would display a little real sympathy with currency troubles and the efforts to find a remedy. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had certainly consented to send representatives to an International Conference, and so far so good. But he had opposed international Bimetallism as strongly as ever, and asked whether an international agreement could be maintained, in case of a great war. The right hon. Gentleman evidently forgot that no great war was ever waged in Europe, excepting when Bimetallism was in force, and that the system was not disturbed. The right hon. Gentleman also quoted an opinion, and endorsed it, that if Bimetallism were established in this country people would rush and withdraw their deposits while they could get gold. The idea was ridiculous. What would be the practical process? A man would go to his banker and ask for his balance. The banker might pay him in gold or bank-notes, in which case he could get gold from the Bank of England. But what would he do with it. He would not keep it in his house for long, and he would return it to the bank. There were evidently exaggerations on both sides of this very difficult question, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer exaggerated the difficulties of an international agreement. If all great nations had an interest in silver, and were willing to co-operate in maintaining its gold value, difficulties would soon disappear. But something short of Bimetallism in this country might be carried out internationally—say, the control and absorption of the silver production of the world. But if Bimetallism pure and simple, at a reasonable ratio, were agreed upon internationally, no difference in our circulation would be perceived. Gold would be just as plentiful, and would be obtainable with even greater facility than now, because it would have no preference anywhere, and would not be hoarded in State banks. However, they could not expect to convert the Chancellor of the Exchequer to Bimetallism in one or two nights, but they might hope that he would favour its adoption elsewhere. Unfortunately, Bimetallism was like a nauseous medicine or mineral water; we were rather prone to recommend it to others, remaining total abstainers ourselves. He would now venture to give a word of warning to his fellow-Bimetallists. It ought not to be assumed that Bimetallism was the panacea for all the evils affecting agriculture and commerce. If our hopes were realised and the rupee maintained at 1s. 4d., it would not materially affect the price of wheat. That, as well as all other produce, was affected by over-production, facilities of transport, and other causes besides the depreciation of silver. If the rupee advanced from 13d. to 16d., the difference would be about 22½ per cent., or 4s. 6d. per quarter on wheat. Against that possible advance they must set the results of increasing facilities of transport by land and sea. There were supplies from other countries not affected by silver. His hon. Friend the Member for the Woodbridge Division, in his able speech on the Address, mentioned Argentina as a silver-using country, where agriculture was in a very prosperous condition. The hon. Member made a very natural mistake, as Argentina had a silvery sound; but the facts were, that the Argentine Republic had a gold currency, and now had paper worth less than 30 per cent. of its former gold value. He mentioned this as an illustration of what he meant by exaggeration as to the effect of Bimetallism on wheat-producing countries. An inflated paper currency had the same effect as depreciated silver in stimulating exports and cheapening the gold price of wheat. Yet no one would advise an international agreement in favour of inconvertible paper. The crux of the evil lay in this, that, with a depreciated currency, wages, rent, and other expenses were reduced artificially in their gold equivalent. Therefore, low-priced silver in India, paper in Argentina, and Mexican silver stimulated exports and depressed prices in this country. If he thought that Bimetallism would appreciably raise the price of bread he would never advocate its adoption. He did not believe that it would have that effect. He was as much in favour of low prices for the necessaries of life as the Chancellor of Exchequer; but there was a great difference between low prices and declining prices. Low prices with steadiness were better for trade than higher prices with unsteadiness. It was transition downwards which destroyed confidence and weakened enterprise. What he believed would result from an assured gold value for silver would be restored confidence for traders, commerce would greatly improve, enterprise in silver-using countries would largely increase, our factories and workshops would be full of activity, the unemployed would be a vanishing quantity, and Her Majesty's Government would never regret helping forward this good work: the rehabilitation of silver by international agreement.

MR. J. SCOTT-MONTAGU (Hants, New Forest) reminded the House that England had lent its gold to nations all over the world, enabling them by that means to build railways in order to develop their resources. The outcome of that was, that they had to pay interest on their gold loans to England by one particular process. They were unable to pay in their own currency, silver, which we would not accept. Therefore they had to pay by means of the excess of their exports over their imports. For instance, Argentina at the present moment owed to England an enormous gold debt, the interest on which she was unable to pay. The result was that she had to establish prohibitive Import Duties on the products we would naturally send her from this country, and thereby set up an artificial balance of trade in her favour, in order to pay the interest on her gold debt on this side. That seemed to controvert the argument that Bimetallism was necessarily adverse to Free Trade. He maintained, on the other hand, that Monometallism was most distinctly adverse to Free Trade. Some gentlemen had said that it was impossible to establish a price at which a metal could be coined by law; but was it not the fact that, at the present moment, if one took one ounce or a dozen ounces of gold to the Mint, he got £3 17s. 10½d. for each ounce of gold coined, and no amount of gold which was produced, or which might be produced in future ages, could affect the price that the Mint was willing to give for every ounce of gold. On the other hand, silver was in a totally different position. Last year, owing to the fall in silver, the Mint in this country was able to make a profit of £343,000 as the seignorage on silver, He submitted that as Bimetallists, they had a right to demand equal treatment for the two metals in this regard. The whole question should be looked at not from the point of view of England by itself, but from our position as a great Eastern Empire that was far and away, in point of trade, the largest in Asia. There was another point of view. England was not essentially a producing country, whereas the silver countries of the world were. All great wheat fields of the world were on a silver basis. Broadly, it might be said the whole of South America was on a silver basis, while in the United States at the present moment the tendency of events was towards the rehabilitation of silver. He congratulated the Chancellor of the Exchequer, not only on the political wisdom, but on the real sense he had shown in accepting the Motion of the hon. Member for the Woodbridge Division. It showed that the right hon. Gentleman admitted that there were two sides to the question, and in agreeing to the motion he was really doing this country a good turn, and distinctly recognising the strength of the movement in favour of Bimetallism, which, they hoped, would prove the means of leading to the eventual rehabilitation of silver.

Mr. T. C. T. WARNER (Somerset, N.) desired to have an opportunity of trying to refute one statement made, not only by the last speaker, but also by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bodmin, and which was that this resolution implied Bimetallism. They all regretted the evils which existed in consequence of the fluctuations in the value of silver, and the inconvenience thereby caused to trade, but that was quite a different thing from accepting the bimetallic cure. Many of them believed that if Bimetallism were accepted it would bring a great deal of distress and trouble upon the countries that accepted it, and, though it might possibly cure the evils of the fluctuations in the value of silver, it ought not to be adopted until its advocates had been able to prove that it would not do more harm than good. Bimetallists by making a law in this country would not be able to fix the value of silver. It had not been established in any way that any law would actually control the value of a thing. He must protest against the idea that advocating an inquiry, or anything of the kind, into this subject implied an absolute pledge to Bimetallism.

Mr. H. S. FOSTER (Suffolk, Lowestoft) congratulated the Mover and Seconder of the Resolution upon the great advance that had been made in the cause they advocated. A great advance, too, had been made in regard to the attitude of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who had that night for the first time treated the subject of Bimetallism with considerable respect. They were told in the Debate upon Agricultural Distress the other day by the Chairman of the Agricultural Commission, that when the Chancellor of the Exchequer came to deal with the question of Bimetallism he would deal with it in his customary manner; and at that statement there was a great deal of laughter in the House. He was glad the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not deal with the question in his customary manner upon that occasion. He thought the Member for the Woodbridge Division had exercised a wise discretion in the framing of the Resolution, because by means of it he had undoubtedly, as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bodmin had shown, committed the House as a whole to that for which Bimetallists had been contending, namely, that great evils had been produced by divorcing gold and silver, and that some means ought to be taken to bring them together again. He should like to call the attention of the House to one statement only with reference to the claim made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the prosperity of the country had been due to the gold standard. That was a fallacy which, he believed, was taught in all their schools and universities for many years past, and upon which, no doubt, the Chancellor of the Exchequer was brought up. Lord Beaconsfield foresaw what was likely to happen in this country in consequence of the holding of that fallacy, for, addressing the Glasgow merchants in 1873 he said:—

> "It is the greatest delusion in the world to attribute the commercial preponderance and prosperity of England to our having a gold standard. Our gold standard is not the cause, but the consequence of our commercial prosperity."

He (Mr. Foster) congratulated the Members of the House who were supporters of Bimetallism upon the able, clear, and masterly speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bodmin. If that speech was distinguished for one thing more than another it was that it was couched in such popular language that it could be understood by the people. He believed agriculture had more to look for from a restoration of the currency to the position it stood in in 1873 than to any other remedies he had yet heard of, and he was glad a bridge had been found by which the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Government could retire from the untenable position they took up last year and the year before. He hoped that whenever the Conference assembled—as assemble it undoubtedly would—the instructions which would be given either by this Government, or some other Government less prejudiced against inquiring into the question, would result in the Conference meeting with free and open minds.

*MR. T. LOUGH (Islington, W.) did not think thoroughgoing advocates of Bimetallism would be altogether satisfied with the way in which the principle had been put before the House in the last few moments. For instance, one hon. Member opposite denounced Monometallism as unfriendly to Free Trade, but surely that was a bold proposition to be made in this Free Trade country. The hon. and gallant Gentleman said, that it was only those who knew nothing of the subject that were Bimetallists. Then the hon. Member for Whitechapel said he would not support Bimetallism if he thought it would raise prices; but all through the Debate the reason given in favour of Bimetallism was that it would raise prices. He did not think the House should be carried away by the fervid eloquence of the hon. Member for Bodmin. After all, the speech consisted of two propositions. The right hon. Gentleman, alluding to the undoubted depression of agriculture, said the machine was working badly, the expenses were great, and the produce was getting less each month. The right hon. Gentleman did not say a word to show that Bimetallism would remedy this state of things in any way; his whole argument was uncandid· Anybody who looked at the matter would see there would have to be a far more thorough change in the system of agriculture than was hinted at by the right hon. Gentleman. The second proposition was that the country would not lose anything by adopting a dual standard of money. That was a very bold proposition to make when our system had been opposed to that principle for nearly three-fourths of a century. The hon. Gentleman who opened the Debate said the value of commodities was "proportionate to the size of the heaps of gold in the country." The value of commodities was not proportionate to the heaps of gold at all; it was proportionate entirely to the demand for those commodities. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sleaford said that when "silver was dethroned all things fell." That was a grand sentence, but it was not correct. All things did not fall. It was notorious that wages had not fallen. The general proposition was that the depreciation in the value of silver had caused low prices. He denied it, as he had already said low prices were due to something entirely different from that. He happened to be interested in a small way with an important Indian trade—the tea trade. Was the effect of the present depreciation of the rupee to cause Indian tea to fall? Why, Indian tea was 40 per cent. dearer now than it was when the rupee was 20 or 30 per cent. more valuable. That proved that the price of the commodity did not depend on the value of the rupee, but on the demand for the commodity in proportion to its supply. Again, two or three years ago, when agriculture was in as depressed a condition as it was now, the price of hay in England doubled and trebled, because there was not as much of the commodity in the country as was wanted. When there was a large demand for a commodity, the price of the commodity would go up, and nothing else would put it up. This talk about the currency led us to the wrong track. But supposing the low prices were caused by the fall in silver, he contended that a fall in prices was not necessarily an evil in any branch of trade. Low prices increased demand and widened the market, as well as conferred great benefits on the community. A good deal had been said about Indian finance, but the cause of India's financial embarrassments were to be sought, not in the fall of the rupee, but in extravagances of Administration and in frontier wars; and the true remedy was to be found in economy. A complaint was also made on behalf of the Indian Civil Servants who returned to this country, that their salaries were calculated on the rupee, which had much depreciated. But even hon. Gentlemen who put forward that argument admitted that the gold the Civil Servants got for the rupee had doubled in value. Therefore, the doubling of the purchasing power of the gold was more than equal to the fall in the value of the rupee. In conclusion, he thanked the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the guarded way in which he had granted the concession to the Bimetallists.

Motion agreed to.

BOARD OF TRADE BANKRUPTCY DEPARTMENT.

Mr. T. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) rose to move for—

> "Copy of all the Correspondence which has passed since the 21st day of July, 1893, with reference or incidental to winding up businesses between any official of the Board of Trade and Mr. Justice Vaughan Williams, and any official of the Board of Trade and the Lord Chancellor or his Secretaries; and also between the Lord Chancellor and Mr. Justice Vaughan Williams."

He said he moved for this Return because he thought the honour of the Department of the Board of Trade was at stake; and therefore he felt sure the Department would raise no objection to it.

It being Twelve o'clock, the Motion stood adjourned.

JOINT STOCK COMPANIES REGISTER BILL.

On the Order for the Second Reading of this Bill,

Mr. BROMLEY-DAVENPORT (Macclesfield) objected.

Mr. J. BAKER (Portsmouth) asked the hon. Member to withdraw his objection, as the Board of Trade were willing that the Bill should be read a second time, if it were not proceeded with further until the Report of the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies had been received.

Mr. BROMLEY-DAVENPORT said, that the Board of Trade had not yet made up their mind on the question, and he must persist in his objection.

The Order accordingly stood over.

CONVENTION OF ROYAL BURGHS (SCOTLAND) ACT 1879 AMENDMENT BILL.

Bill considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Bill reported to the House without Amendment.

Question proposed and Motion made, "That the Bill be read a third time."—*(Mr. J. Parker Smith.)*

Motion agreed to.

Bill read 3 .

The House adjourned at Five minutes after Twelve o'clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 27th February 1895.

The House met at Two of the clock.

REPLY TO THE ADDRESS.

*The VICE CHAMBERLAIN (Mr. C. R. Spencer, Mid Northants), brought up Her Majesty's Gracious Reply to the Address of Thanks in answer to the Speech from the Throne, as follows:

"I have read with great satisfaction the expression of your loyal and dutiful thanks for the Speech with which I have opened the present Session of Parliament."

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER (No. 1) BILL.

Read 2°, and committed.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

PISTOLS BILL.

The Marquess of CARMARTHEN (Lambeth, Brixton), in moving the Second Reading of the Pistols Bill, said the subject of the Bill was one in which he had taken an interest for a long time. He had been exceptionally fortunate in the ballot this year, and so was now able to bring forward this Bill. He knew it was not an heroic piece of Legislation, but it would be of very great benefit to the people of this country. The Bill had not been an easy one to draft. He should have preferred a Bill providing that nobody except a soldier, sailor, or policeman, should have a pistol at all, because they were a source of danger to their possessors; but he had been obliged to fall back on the Bill as amended by the Standing Committee of the Lords last year. He had made one or two alterations in it which he thought were improvements. On the general aspect of the question he should have thought everyone would have been in agreement had not an hon. Member for one of the Divisions of Lancashire, who was thoroughly consistent in his opposition to this Bill, given notice to move its rejection, his objection to it being that it was an interference with the liberties of the subject. He was not himself in favour of legislative interference with the liberties of the subject, or of what was called grandmotherly legislation; but when the injuries inflicted by these pistols were to be counted by hundreds he thought it was time for the Legislature to step in. It was a great and growing evil which was year after year steadily increasing. He had subscribed for many years to a press-cutting agency for cuttings on this subject, and he had ample proof of the enormous number of injuries inflicted. Judges, coroners, and coroners' juries were constantly urging that something should be done in the matter. Mr. Justice Lawrance, on Monday last, at the Manchester Assizes, asked how long the people of this country would permit men like the prisoner—who had murdered a poor woman—to arm themselves with revolvers. At one time the Home Secretary had been strongly of the same opinion, and he hoped he was still of the same opinion. The first alteration he had made in the Bill was to substitute "some consecutive number of a series" for "a distinctive trade mark," as he thought that this method of marking a pistol would be a further means of identification. An influential deputation from the gun trade had assured him that this could be easily done. Another change was in the direction of making the Bill rather less stringent; he had not made any provision in regard to foreigners, who, when in England, must conform to the regulations of the country. In regard to Englishmen about to emigrate who desired to buy pistols, in the original Bill they had to sign a statement before a Justice of the Peace, but it had been pointed out to him that emigrants might by this regulation be seriously inconvenienced, or that the trade might suffer, and accordingly he had struck out that provision, and the Bill simply required that intending emigrants should sign a declaration themselves stating that they were going abroad for a period of not less than six months. He had raised the fee for the licence to sell pistols to £1, and he thought this provision would be very useful in checking the sale of the cheap so-called "toy" pistols by which so many of these injuries were inflicted. He hoped the charge of Protection would not be made against this clause of the Bill, because he believed that it was a step taken in the interest of the safety of the public. The greatest change he had made in the Bill was in Clause 9, which provided that—

> "Every person who at the time of the passing of this Act is in possession of a pistol must within one month of the said date obtain from an officer of the Post Office a licence to possess such pistol."

For this licence 1s. would be charged. He had drafted this clause because he thought it very necessary to deal with the thousands of pistols already distributed. He thought this licence should be an annual one, but this would be a point for a Committee to decide. He submitted that it was no greater hardship for a man to have to take out a licence for a pistol than for a dog, for armorial bearings, or even for the right to have a crest on the liveries of his servants. Those who represented the Home Office might point out objections to this course; and, if it were necessary to secure the Second Reading of the Bill, he was even ready to forego the clause, but he thought it a very desirable one. He had re-inserted the Search Clause, which had been struck out of the old Bill, but this was, of course, a matter for the Home Office rather than for a private Member to pronounce upon. The only other alteration was in the definition of a toy pistol, which, according to Clause 13, was—

> "one in which no communication between the nipple and the barrel can be made;"

and he thought it was by no means an unnecessary alteration. He hoped the House would consent to the Second Reading of the Bill.

*Mr. C. H. HOPWOOD (Lancashire, S.E., Middleton) rose to move: "That the Bill be read a second time that day six months." He remarked that he hoped to be able to show that on this, as on previous occasions, the House would be justified in refusing to enter upon objectionable Legislation such as the Bill proposed — Legislation that savoured strongly, too, of a grandmotherly character. The Bill, if passed, would be utterly futile and inoperative. It involved an entire disregard of public and individual liberty; and, having regard to the manner in which the House had previously received similar proposals, he was surprised that the question should be again brought forward. Seeing also that the predecessors of the present Home Secretary had refused to listen to such proposals, he could not understand why the right hon. Gentleman should have pledged himself to this Bill. Such Legislation as the Bill proposed was not to be tolerated; it descended too low into *minutiæ* to be effective; and, as it would be inoperative and disregarded, it would tend to bring the law into contempt. The Bill was introduced, he presumed, to protect the public in two respects—firstly, against young people who possessed, or used pistols—mostly toy pistols; and secondly, against the use of pistols by certain disorderly and violent persons. Against the latter, he presumed, the Bill was mainly directed. The law already was, that every person who had a pistol was, liable to pay a gun licence. The Gun Licence Act declared, however, that everyone possessing a firearm for the defence of his house should be exempt from the licence; but this Bill ignored altogether the question of self-defence, and proposed to place every possible difficulty in the way of a person freely purchasing a pistol under any circumstances. An important ground on which the Bill was based was the number of accidents which had taken place with pistols or firearms, and here he demurred strongly to the exaggerated statements made. Now, in 1893 the Home Office issued a Return giving particulars of cases treated for revolver or pistol wounds in the Metropolitan and provincial hospitals during the years 1890, 1891, and 1892. What were the facts? During those three years the total number of fatal wounds inflicted was 59, and that among a population of nearly 30,000,000! Was that an extravagant number? Did that number justify the extreme nervousness expressed about the free possession of pistols? Well, of those 59 cases 19 were accidental, 35 were suicidal, and only 3 were homicidal—one a year. Was it supposed that the Bill would have any effect in the repression of suicide? The notion was absurd, whilst so many other means of self-destruction were easily accessible, Therefore, on this ground also, there was no warrant for such pernicious Legislation. The total number of cases not fatal dealt with in the hospitals in the three years was 226—again, not an extraordinary number when compared with the number of the population. Then as to coroners' inquests in cases relating to the use of the revolver: Of those there were altogether 536 in three years, 49 of which were accidental, 443 suicidal, 32 homicidal, and 12 not known. Again he would put it to the House whether those figures justified such a stringent Bill? He maintained that they did not. The number of persons sentenced to death in the three years for murder committed by means of revolvers was 3 in 1890, 4 in 1891, and 3 in 1892. Another Return relating to outrages committed in England and Wales by burglars carrying firearms had been issued. The Return covered the five years ending December 1892. It showed that during that time no policeman had been "shot dead," the words of the Return, that 3 had been wounded, that 18 had escaped arrest by use of firearms, and that the total number of burglars on whom firearms were found on arrest was 31. To say that because there were some persons who would make a violent use of pistols, therefore the right of purchase or possession by every Englishman should be taken away, was monstrous. The facts he had quoted were before the public two years ago, when similar proposals were brought forward and withdrawn from the House; and why, in face of them, the question should be again introduced, and this Bill receive the support of the Home Secretary he could not imagine. There was always some one in the House who thought that an Act of Parliament would stop anything; but the argument he wished to present was, that Acts of Parliament should be limited to such matters as could really be governed by Acts of Parliament, and that their force should not be lessened by application to matters which they could not possibly effect, and in regard to which no sufficient case had been made out. There were men in this law-loving country who attached an almost sacred effect to an Act of Parliament. Directly something was denounced, an Act of Parliament was suggested to deal with it. The noble Lord said that coroners' juries and some of the Judges had expressed themselves in favour of the Bill. He claimed to see as much as any Judge of the evils with which it was supposed to deal; and he had not had one single case of pistol-wounding for the last 10 years. Truly, fatal cases would not come before him, but wounding cases would; and he, moreover, saw the Assizes. If individual experience were to be quoted, then he threw his against the Bill. Within the last six months there had been two gun accidents by the instrumentality of children; and these accidents were, as often as not, carried to the credit of revolvers. But no attempt was made to restrict the sale of guns, in order to diminish gun accidents; and why? Because the class who used guns would not stand it; the sacred claims of sport would be interfered with. But if Legislation was good in regard to pistols and pistol ammunition, why was it not good in regard to guns and gun ammunition? Was the House going to vote on this Bill with the blind hope of being able to do what the Bill purported to do? Such Legislation was descending to deal with what was not a crime, and to prohibit what might be perfectly lawful, genuine, and rational, because violence, accidental or otherwise, might result. If the use of dangerous weapons were to be prohibited, why not have an investigation in regard to knives? Why should a man be allowed to carry a dagger or stiletto, and not a revolver? The number of murders, suicides, and woundings, committed by means of knives was infinitely greater than the number committed by pistols. One might carry life-preservers and all sorts of offensive weapons, but this special prohibition was made with respect to the revolver, and was mainly directed against the toy pistol. Was this the time to pass a Bill which must have an effect on trade if it were to fulfil its purpose? No doubt there were gunmakers who would be subservient to the Government's wishes; and no doubt the noble Lord was a good customer. He did not wish to say anything personal, but there was a tendency in human nature to be kind to those who were kind.

THE MARQUESS OF CARMARTHEN: I may tell the hon. Member, for his satisfaction, that I have never bought a pistol in my life, and I hope I never shall.

*Mr. HOPWOOD said, that the noble Lord had bought guns. The Bill would restrict trade in favour of the foreigner who might import wholesale; and when so many workmen found difficulty in obtaining employment it was not the time to impose vexatious restrictions on trade, which it was not certain would effect their object. By the Bill, young people under 18 were not to be trusted with pistols. Probably, hon. Members who approved of that had forgotten their own young days. The thing was childish. If it were wrong for young people to have pistols, the matter was one for the cognisance of parental authority. Would a fine of 10s. quicken parental control? And, if a boy possessed a pistol in spite of parental prohibition, it was rather hard to fine the parent, for, of course, it was he who paid the fine. To send the boy to prison might be efficacious, but he should not counsel any such course as that. The gunmaker was prohibited expressly from selling a pistol, or ammunition for a pistol, to a person under 18 years of age. Was the effect of that enactment seen? It was practically a declaration that the gunmaker might sell as much ammunition for a gun or a cannon as a young person wished to buy. A boy might blow his head off with gunpowder for all the Bill might do; and the accidents from gunpowder had been far more severe and numerous than those from pistols. The Bill made our Legislation ridiculous. It was as much as possible a piece of class Legislation, for those who had wealth would find a way of getting round the provisions of the the Bill; and they would only touch those who were low enough in the social scale to come within the cognisance of the police. The noble Lord had flung certain parts of his measure overboard. But why had he put them in? What had happened since the Bill was brought into the House two years ago. It was impossible to make the proposals in the Bill effective in a manner that the temper of the people would stand. The Bill proposed to give any officer of police power to search any person whom he suspected of carrying a pistol, and a nice state of things such a clause would be likely to produce. The noble Lord had said he was going to throw that over, but such a course would, after all, hardly be a logical one. Unless there were some means of knowing who carried a revolver, how could such an Act be carried out? The draftsman of the Bill was acting logically in putting that provision into it, as without it the greater part of the provisions of the Bill would fall to the ground, excepting such irritating provision as making a man enter into the barest of declarations on entering a gunsmith's shop. There were men who had to walk home in lonely and disturbed districts, and there was really nothing in their wishing to carry a revolver for protection. But before such a man could do so, he was bound to go to the head policeman of the district and get his permission to carry the weapon. Such a proposal was perfectly absurd. Imagine anyone low down in the social scale wishing and asking for such permission. A man might have some strong difference with his mates, or know of a ruffian who was likely to beat him; but, before he could carry the arm, he had to go to the head constable, and then, if he got the permission, he could go about with practically six men's lives in his keeping. It interested him to know whether the Government intended supporting that clause, which practically made those persons who ought to be our servants our masters. These constables should have every consideration that the law demanded of us, and should receive every respect and attention which could be given them, but they should not receive special powers under an Act of Parliament which would set them up as dictators. The noble Lord was under the impression that vast numbers of revolvers were in existence, and that their existence must be ascertained, but one could not comprehend how that information could be obtained except by having a domiciliary search. Perhaps that was the intention, and then the police could see who possessed these things. But if such a search were made he had no doubt that there would be a little pressure upon one class, and a little relaxation in favour of another class, because, as he had said, this was class Legislation. The noble Lord further proposed that persons who possessed pistols should be registered, so that every man who had an antiquated pistol in his possession—it might be for decorative purposes only—would have to walk away to the post office and get it registered. Every Member of that House who had an old and useless weapon, long since forgotten, and lying by in some out-of-the-way drawer, would have to get leave to retain it. Of course, it might be said that that would not be much for them to do, but it was a degradation to have to do such a thing, and he felt bound to protest against the proposal being passed into law. The Bill would impose a most inconvenient disability upon a traveller returning from abroad, and who happened to have got a pistol for his protection. On landing he would have to sign a declaration as to its possession before being able to proceed to his destination. And not only would an additional duty be thus imposed upon the Customs officers, but strict searching of baggage would be revived. A large number of exceptions, however, were made, applying to men in the Navy, Army, Volunteers, Yeomany, Police, and the Postal Service, so that there would be a large number of pistols about, with nothing in the Bill to prohibit their being lent to boys. He had endeavoured to put forward some of the salient points which could be urged against the Bill, but had further objections to make to the clauses if the Bill reached the Committee stage, and he promised that those objections should be fully heard. No case, he maintained, had been made out for this extraordinary alteration of the law, and as it would interfere with personal liberty, he thought that many hon. Members would agree that the importance of the subject warranted his moving the rejection the Bill.

*SIR A. K. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) in seconding the Amendment said, that although he objected to the principles of the Bill, the noble Lord (Carmarthen) had ably put before the House considerations of some force in its favour. But while it might be conceded that there was a mischief to be aimed at by the Bill, he submitted that it proposed unnecessary restrictions, and went beyond what was necessary to achieve the purpose in view. For some of the provisions of the Bill there was a good deal to be said. The danger of the carriers of pistols to other people might be considered, and for the clauses which sought to prohibit young persons from obtaining pistols there were precedents in legislation. But, it had been said that toy pistols were the most dangerous of all, yet they were expressly excepted from the provisions of the Bill, and the definition of a toy pistol in the Bill was an absolutely impracticable one—namely, one in which no communication between the trigger or cartridge and ball can be made. The definition defied both physics and mechanics. Therefore, not only was the Bill objectionable because it excepted toy pistols, but the very definition of them was manifestly impossible. His chief objection to the Bill was that it conflicted with the principles of legislation. Law was an evil, but often a necessary evil, and they should not legislate except in cases in which it was absolutely and conclusively proved to be necessary. Restraint of trade was manifest in the Bill and emphasised in it, because it was only to apply to purchases "in the course of trade and business." Therefore, he supposed the prohibitions of the Bill would not apply to dealings between two individuals not engaged in a particular business. It restrained business by applying to all transactions in retail buying and selling, and would make such dealings almost impossible for the time of purchase, and the cost, &c., of a weapon which might [be used for a harmless and useful purpose, were to be entered in a book, all of which trouble meant, in trade, money and additional cost, for a clerk might have to be kept to make the necessary entries. Pistols were to bear the mark of the maker or vendor. Merchandise marks had been useful, but they were in danger of carrying to excess a system which was already interfering with over-sea traffic, especially in cases of transhipment and direct shipments from the Continent, instead of through England. The present owners of pistols were to present themselves at the Post Office and effect the registration of the weapons—which would lead to time and cost—and in addition a licence of £1 was to be paid, which exceed by half the present cost of a gun licence. There was a great disparity between the tax of 1s. proposed in former Bills and the £1 now proposed. Even more objectionable than the restraint on trade was the restraint on personal liberty involved in the Bill. Any policeman who suspected anyone of carrying a pistol, was to be at liberty to search him and seize the pistol if found. He protested against anything in the nature of class distinctions, and if that provision of the Bill took effect it would not do so with regard to a certain class, but might be applied to others in a humbler social position. The exemption as to soldiers and volunteers only applied to those who were in the performance of their duties or engaged in target practice. So that a volunteer who, for convenience, took his firearm to his office or place of business before going to drill, as volunteers often did, would be rendered liable to a penalty of £10. He remembered Sir Redvers Buller, saying, during the Featherstone Riots Inquiry, in answer to a question, that a man carrying a pistol was a far greater danger to himself than to others. If the dangers to others was thus minimised, the danger to the man himself was one against which he should be taught to protect himself. When he was in the United States he remarked upon the absence of precaution with regard to the railways down the main streets, for the safety of life, and the reply was: "We, in our country teach people to take care of themselves and to learn that legislation can't do it." The restrictions on personal liberty proposed in the Bill passed the bound, which should be observed in legislation of this kind. This Bill was a sample not only of what was called grandmotherly but great-grandmotherly legislation, and he was surprised that an advanced Government like that in power should think it necessary to help people to take care of themselves instead of teaching them to do effectively what was their duty to themselves.

*THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (MR. G. RUSSELL, North Beds) said, the First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Herbert Gladstone), who was more connected with the early stages of the Bill than himself, would deal with its details. He, himself, rose mainly for the purpose of assuring the noble Marquess opposite that the Government were exceedingly well disposed to the experiment he was undertaking. [*Ministerial cries of* "Oh," *and cheers.*] Yes, but he did not wish to make his statement stronger than was absolutely necessary. He did not, of course, intend to convey that every provision of the Bill would meet with the approbation of the Government. Two clauses in particular—the Search Clause and the Registration Clause—he understood the noble Marquess had abandoned. He would have consulted the interests of the Bill in not inviting hostility by allowing those clauses to appear. He cordially recognised, and he thought the House would do so, the moderate, candid and reasonable tone in which the noble Marquess approached the consideration of the question. The time-honoured phrase "grandmotherly legislation" had been used. There was a time when it conveyed a distinct reproach. In the days of a restricted suffrage, grandmotherly legislation was passed by a privileged and represented class at the expense of the unrepresented class. But now every man was his own grandmother; at any rate every man had a share in shaping the counsels of what might be called his grandmother the State, and therefore the sting of the reproach had been removed. The evil with which the Bill sought to deal was not of such magnitude as to justify legislation by the Government. It was very properly the subject of legislation by unofficial Members on the general lines of this Bill to which the Government would give their sanction and support. With regard to the use of firearms by burglars, it appeared from the interesting collection of burglars' weapons at Scotland Yard that the use of pistols by that class of criminals was largely on the increase. He set higher store than some hon. Members seemed to do upon life and eyesight, and if they could demonstrate that the present state of the law placed life and eyesight in unnecessary peril from firearms, a *prima facie* case would be made out for legislation. If they could save one life or one human being's eyesight, then trouble would not be thrown away. His hon. and learned Friend the Member for Middleton had said that the natural tendency of human nature was to be kind to those who were kind to us. He sincerely hoped that his hon. Friend would find that that maxim held good in his own case, and that pistol buyers and pistol users would be kind to one who, in Parliament and out of it, had been so kind to them. His hon. Friend also said that those who were responsible for the clause dealing with the young person must have forgotten the days of their youth. The whole discussion had brought back vividly to his mind an occurrence during his school days at Harrow, when a contemporary of his shot himself dead accidentally with a pistol which he had brought from home. It was on account of such sad recollections of the carelessness of young persons with firearms that the Bill would find favour in the eyes of most people. His hon. Friend spoke about the impossibility of carrying out the law. Certainly, it would not be easy ; but that was an objection that could be advanced against all legislation. All legislation was more or less liable to be defeated by the perverseness of those it was intended to control ; but if a law of this kind were passed there would be a discouragement by society of the free use of those deadly weapons which would be a substantial benefit to the community. His hon. Friend contended that the possession of pistols was a primary necessity of human nature, and that it was cruel to interfere with it. His hon. Friend drew a graphic picture of a gentleman with self-preserving instincts who after dinner—his hon. Friend laid emphasis on the "after-dinner"—walked in the dark across the fields armed with a pistol. He held that a self-preserving gentleman after dinner in the dark armed with a pistol was a serious danger to the community. His hon. Friend used one significant phrase. He protested against the degradation to which a free citizen was exposed by being called upon to give an account of his movements to the police authorities. It seemed to him that there was a fundamental error undelying his hon. Friend's view as to what was degradation. Compliance with the law was not necessarily degradation, and the preservation of life and limb and eyesight was no invasion of the principles of personal freedom. These were the grounds on which the Government sympathised with the objects of the Bill, but they reserved to themselves the right to deal with the details of the Bill in Committee.

MR. CYRIL DODD (Essex, Maldon) agreed that the object of the promoters of the Bill was excellent. It was to prevent that unrestricted use of pistols by small boys which was the cause of so many accidents. But he was disposed to think that many of the clauses went beyond what was necessary for the simple purpose of the Bill itself. The principal clause of the Bill, in his opinion, was Clause 3, which said that a person under the age of 18 should not possess or carry a pistol. The age ought to be lowered in Committee. A small boy of 15 was better without a pistol, but when they came to be 18 he doubted whether they would put up with being denied pistols, and if they did not put up with it, with being liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one month. He thought the clause would be a valuable one if limited to the lower age of 15, and if the punishment were dropped altogether. Indeed, taking the Bill as a whole, the House would find that about half the clauses should be struck out; but if what remained were valuable, as he believed it was, it would be a pity that it should be lost because the Bill was overloaded with bad clauses. Clause 1 provided that certain persons were to be allowed to buy pistols, such as officers of the navy, military, volunteer and yeomanry services. The simple plan would be to allow everyone to buy pistols except lads of 15 years. Then there was a clause declaring that no person should carry a loaded pistol on a highway or public place without the permission of the Chief of Police. That clause would be unnecessary if the application of the Bill were limited to boys of 14 years. But the people did not desire to put themselves in the hands of the Chief of Police. In this country the police were the servants, the excellent servants of the people; and the people had no intention of making them their masters. Again, he did not think the people would tolerate a punishment of a month's imprisonment, whether they were under 18 or over 18, because they happened to carry a loaded pistol in a public place. He also confessed that he had sympathy with the attack made on the Bill on the ground that it savoured of class legislation. It was like the betting laws. A poor man with a pistol would be hauled up by the police, and the man with a good coat would not. The substance of his observations was that there was in the Bill a useful principle to which they might all assent; but when it got into Committee it would be their duty to cut out nearly half of the clauses, and what would be left would be of solid and real value.

Mr. J. A. PEASE (Northumberland, Tyneside) said, that a sad accident which occurred in his constituency last year was an illustration of the kind of accident the promoters of the Bill desired to prevent in the future. At a school treat, a boy pulled the trigger of a pistol, one chamber of which was loaded; and a lady, the daughter of the Vicar of the parish, was shot dead. The pistol had been bought in Newcastle, that afternoon, by a schoolfellow or boy, for the sum of 4s. At that time a great number of pistols was being sent over from Belgium, and they were being largely bought by schoolboys, who, when riding in railway trains, made a practice of firing out of windows. It was astonishing to him that more accidents did not occur, seeing that pistols could be bought so easily. The licence duty of 10s. for the carrying of arms was inoperative. Many people kept dogs without paying duty, and it was much easier to carry a pistol than to keep a dog. He did not commit himself to all the details of the Bill, but he hoped the Second Reading would be carried.

Commander BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness) said, they might agree that it was desirable to keep pistols out of the hands of objectionable persons and out of those of young people, and yet they might find it difficult to give effect to those principles without vesting the police with overwhelming powers. If the age of prohibition could be cut down to 13 or 14, then it would seem that the desired object might be attained by the exercise of parental authority. As regarded an objectionable person, it was obvious that the difficulty to be placed in his way was that of obtaining a licence, in the same way that it was attempted by law to diminish the facility of obtaining poisons. The question was who was to grant licences to carry pistols. It was said it was to be the justices; but that would hardly meet the case, because objectionable persons would be able to get licences from them. It would seem to be impossible to maintain the clause giving power of search, and he did not expect that even that would be effective for the purpose of keeping pistols out of the hands of objectionable persons. Still, it was possible that the House might be able to turn the Bill into a useful measure, and therefore he would support the Second Reading.

Mr. A. CROSS (Glasgow, Camlachie) doubted whether it was wise to proceed with the Second Reading of a Bill the friends of which began by admitting that something like one-half of the clauses would have to be eliminated. The proposals of the Bill had led him to ask himself whether he was living under a Home Rule Parliament in Glasgow or in Ireland, particularly the provision that a man was not to have a gun or a dangerous weapon without being liable to account for the possession of it to the police. On broad grounds he protested against the Bill, first because it was admitted to be imperfect to the extent of one-half of it; secondly, because its provisions as to the searching of individuals was monstrous, and ought not to be embodied in a Bill applying generally to the whole country; and, thirdly, because it would be waste-paper if it was passed. He could understand it if it was proposed to destroy all pistols that were already in private possession. The use of these could not be prevented except by the exercise of police powers, which would not be tolerated. The Bill would be ineffectual because it excepted wholesale transactions, and therefore would not prevent distribution by wholesale buyers. There was not a clause through which a coach and four could not be driven, even by a Scotsman. The only part worth retaining was that which was to be deliberately abandoned. If accidents were to be prevented, search must be insisted upon, and the Bill must apply to pistols already in private possession. He regretted that the House was devoting its time and energy to this Bill.

*MR. LLOYD MORGAN (Carmarthen, W.) entirely agreed with the remarks of the last speaker. The discussion of the Bill seemed to him to be a positive waste of the time of the House of Commons. The Bill was silly, childish and babyish, and, if he had known it was coming on he would have supported a motion against the House meeting at all on Ash Wednesday. No case whatever had been made out for the Bill. A very strong case ought to be made out for any Bill which interfered with personal liberty which created a new offence, and which would be a penal Statute if it was passed. No doubt accidents occurred with pistols, as with guns, and in other ways; but the House would not be justified in passing such a Bill because a few accidents happened through carelessness or negligence. Recently there had been a case in Kent, where a farm labourer went out of his mind, took a gun from his master's house, and shot two ladies. That was very distressing; but no one proposed exceptional Legislation in consequence, and the present Bill would not touch such cases. If there were to be Legislation in regard to fire-arms, let it cover the whole ground. As to the Returns which had been brought forward, and on which alone any case for the Bill could be made out, the vast majority of the fatal cases were suicides, and cases of suicide and murder could be set aside in considering the purposes of the Bill, for it would obviously do nothing to prevent them. Then it came to this—that, because of a few hundred accidents which had occurred among a population of 30,000,000 in three years, this Bill was to be accepted. If the measure were passed, next Session some one would move for Returns of the number of violent crimes committed with knives, and then it would be made a penal offence to carry a penknife. The Bill ought to be laughed out of the House of Commons and treated with the contempt it deserved.

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (MR. HERBERT J. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.) thought that the hon. Member had overstated his case. He did not attempt to attach more importance to the measure than it deserved; but it was one which ought to receive the attention and consideration of the House. Several hon. Members asked why the Government had expressed sympathy with the measure. As a matter of fact, successive Home Secretaries for the last 20 years had pledged themselves to deal with this question if possible, having before them the official information supplied by various authorities throughout the country. There were piles and piles of papers at the Home Office, including letters from the Judges and coroners; urging that some restrictive Legislation should be passed in respect of pistols and toy pistols. The police were of opinion that a measure of this kind was very much needed, and there was nobody in the country in a better position than the police to know the circumstances under which each of the accidents arising from pistols took place. They investigated each case as it came before them, and when the Bill, which the Government brought in two years ago, was sent down for the opinion of the experienced chiefs of police, it received their hearty approval. If all these officials were in favour of the measure, and if successive Secretaries of State on consideration of the question had all come to the conclusion that something ought to be done, it was a question which, at any rate, deserved serious attention. The figures from the returns had been quoted, and no doubt the totals were not very remarkable. But in three years there were in the coroners' returns 49 fatal cases from accident with revolvers and 443 cases of suicide, while the hospital returns showed 226 cases of injury from pistol wounds. But while the complete list of fatal accidents was available it was impossible to get anything like a complete list of injuries. There were only the hospital returns to go upon, and there were many cases which were treated at home. But if it were possible to say that a certain percentage of life would be saved by the Bill the Bill ought to be passed. He did not think that it could reach the majority of the cases, but it might reach a considerable proportion of them ; and if it saved the lives of eight or ten unhappy lads in the course of a year, and prevented many more cases of serious injury, it would be doing a good work. The question was—would the Bill be likely to do any harm? He could not see what harm it would do by any possibility. The hon. Member for the Camlachie Division said that he might purchase 100 pistols and give one to every member of his family. That would be a family on rather a large scale, and it would not be the action of any reasonable man. Of course, unreasonable people could defeat the object of the Bill. It was said that the Bill represented class Legislation. It was nothing of the kind. The majority of the accidents which happened were among poor people, who could not afford to buy good pistols and who bought the cheap and dangerous weapons. The Bill was primarily designed to protect them from accident. There was no sign of class Legislation in the Bill. Hon. Members urged that the measure was an arbitrary interference with the right to carry pistols. People generally had the right to look after their own life and limb, and if Gentlemen like the hon. Member for Middleton (Mr. Hopwood) were going to walk about after dinner armed with revolvers other people had the right to take reasonable precautions against being accidentally shot. There were certain Clauses in the Bill which were highly unsatisfactory, but those could be considered in Committee. As to the objection that the provisions could not be carried out, it was to be observed that under the Bill the police would have power to act on their own information, a power which they did not possess under the Gun Act. He did not attach too much importance to the Bill, but it justified the Government in extending sympathy towards it, and he hoped that the House would read it a second time.

Mr. C. DIAMOND (Monaghan. N.) said, that he was almost inclined to support the measure, in order that people in England might realise what treatment was meted out to the Irish people. He had formed the opinion, after hearing what had been said, that this Bill ought to be considered reasonably and calmly. He should, therefore, support the Second Reading. If it should be thought that more evidence ought to be obtained on the points with which it dealt, let the Bill be referred to a Committee.

Mr. H. J. WILSON (York, W.R., Holmfirth) thought the Bill was ridiculous. Sub-section 2 of Clause 9 provided that a copy of the measure should be exhibited in every post office in the kingdom. For a proposal of that kind there was no precedent, and assent ought not to be given to it.

Reference had been made by the Representative of the Government to the statements of the police, but those statements had not been submitted to the House in the usual way. There were police *and* police in this country; and, while the conduct of some of the members of the force was admirable, the conduct of others was arbitrary and harsh, and to these he should be very sorry to intrust the power which the Bill would confer upon them. He hoped the measure would be laughed out of the House.

Mr. J. HAVELOCK WILSON (Middlesbrough) observed that a large majority of the seamen in our ports carried revolvers, although there was no necessity in this country to be armed with such a weapon. In trade disputes he had sometimes found himself in the position of having to disarm some of the men on his own side. In one case he collected between 10 and 15 revolvers. He was of opinion that some restriction ought to be put upon the large sale of revolvers that took place in some of our towns. In industrial disputes they found that employers were arming the men. If precautions were not taken hon. Members who laughed at this Bill would perhaps hear some day of a civil war on a small scale in this country. A Clause in the Bill proposed to give the right to officers on board ship to carry revolvers. To that proposal he could not assent. At the present time a large portion of the crew on many vessels were armed with revolvers, and the practice ought to be put an end to. If a seaman wanted to purchase a revolver he would not take the trouble to apply to a magistrate for a licence. In many seaport towns, such as Cardiff, it was a common thing to see piles of revolvers exhibited in the shop windows. He was in favour of the principle of the Bill, but there were Clauses in it which needed amendment.

*Mr. A. C. MORTON (Peterborough) said, that it was necessary that officers on board ship should have weapons in order to control the men in cases of emergency. The First Commissioner of Works had quoted from papers which had not been laid upon the Table of the House. That was contrary to the ordinary practice and was unfair.

Mr. HERBERT J. GLADSTONE explained that the only papers to which he had referred were papers containing statements which had appeared in the Press. They were the public recommendations of juries, coroners, and others in favour of the change advocated by the promoters of this Bill.

*Mr. A. C. MORTON pointed out that reference had also been made to reports of police superintendence which had not appeared in the newspapers. If all documents of this kind bearing on the question had been laid on the Table of the House, it might have been found that some of them recorded opinions against the Bill. The retention of these documents constituted good ground for a postponement of the measure. The real promoters of this Bill were the game preservers, the gentlemen who supported the iniquitous Game Laws. They hoped by this means to put a stop to poaching. Even if the Bill were passed it could not prevent the occurrence of such accidents as had been mentioned. They ought to have more evidence before them as to the dangers caused by bad or inferior pistols before being asked to pass such grandmotherly Legislation. It had been said that the Bill could do no harm; but were they to agree to all Bills recommended on such negative ground? If so, there would be indefinite additions to the Statute Book. This measure would be quite powerless to prevent murders or suicides. If once they embarked in Legislation of this kind, where would they stop? Why should they not be asked to pass a measure to prevent people from walking in the streets of the city where there was, he believed, one serious accident a day on the average? Why did not the noble

Marquess turn his attentien to a "pocket pistol" of another kind? The consumption of alcoholic drink caused many thousand deaths every year. The noble Marquess did not propose to legislate on that subject because it concerned the pockets of his friends the brewers. Let the noble Lord and hon. Gentlemen opposite use their influence, if they were afraid to do it openly, at least assist the Radical Party to put down the great evils to which he referred. He should be sorry to take up time in going over this Bill clause by clause, because it was a most wicked Bill. Members of the gun trade had come to him and urged that the Bill would be an interference with trade, and would not prevent people having pistols. He should like to know that the gun licence, for example, had prevented accidents from guns, because he had never heard that that was the case. If anything of the kind could be shown, the Bill would be worth having. He strongly objected to a Radical Government, which owed its existence to the Radical Party, who were so anxious to get rid of the iniquities of the Game Laws altogether, supporting a Bill which was of no use whatever except to the game-preserving interest. He trusted the House would have the good sense to throw the Bill out on Second Reading, and not be bothered with it any more. There was quite enough interference with the liberty of the subject already. In the interests of public health some interference was necessary, but it was not necessary to have this grandmotherly legislation, because if they carried out the principle to its logical conclusion, next year the House would be asked to assent to a Bill to prevent the use of pocket-knives; and even the use of forks would be denied them. He hoped, bearing in mind where this Bill came from, that the House would send it where it ought to go.

*Mr. T. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) said, he had had considerable doubt whether he ought to support this Bill, but the doubt had been removed by the speeches of those who had opposed it. The Bill, he assured the hon. Member, had nothing on earth to do with the Game Laws. No man ever went shooting pheasants with a revolver; no, nor even snipe. The hon. Member for Islington warned the House that all Legislation was an evil when it could be avoided. He rejoiced to hear that, because of all the patentees of new and original Legislation promoted in this House after hours, the hon. Member for Islington was the greatest offender. He trusted the hon. Member would lay to heart his own homily. The hon. Member opposite drew a fearful picture of respectable gentlemen going home after dinner without a revolver. What respectable middle-aged gentlemen wanted to carry about a revolver for he did not know. He asked whether the hon. Gentleman had got one in his hip pocket now? He ought to be searched for arms when he left the House. It was proved by statistics at the Home Office, and demands made upon that Office, that this was a good Bill—in intention. The only fault imputed to the Bill was, that all its clauses were bad. That, however, could be said of every Bill ever introduced by the Front Bench opposite, and he would suggest to his noble Friend to refer it to the Standing Committee on Law, which would be competent to remove any defects, small or large, that might lurk in any of its clauses.

Mr. W. P. BYLES (York, W.R., Shipley) desired to draw attention to the position this question had now attained in the House of Commons. The Bill, or a similar Bill, had been before the House in previous sessions, but had never got through this House. On this occasion the noble Lord had dropped clause after clause of the Bill until there was almost nothing left of it but its Preamble, and he hoped in that way to scrape it through the House. The Bill was almost entirely unsupported by argument, and, on the other hand, it had been covered by ridicule.

*MR. J. FLETCHER MOULTON (Hackney, S.) said, the Bill left untouched almost every one of the evils to which its supporters had referred. What was the meaning of the statement of the First Commissioner of Works? It must mean either that Secretaries of State for 20 years had considered the material in their hands, and had given up the subject as too difficult to legislate upon, or that they had abandoned the hope of doing it themselves in the hope that some measure brought in by mixed interests might get through Second Reading without their responsibility. The right hon. Gentleman said it was the intention of the Government to support any attempt to reduce the number of accidents arising from the sale and use of bad pistols; but there was not a word in the Bill which prevented bad pistols being sold. There were two distinct classes of evils arising from the use of pistols, namely, those which resulted from accident, and those which were the result of design. Under the first head there was the use of pistols by incompetent persons, and the use of bad pistols; and under the second head there was the use of pistols by persons who ought not to have pistols at all. But this Bill touched neither class of cases in any effective way. It did not touch the question of the ownership of the pistols, but only the question of their purchase. If a man wanted to buy a pistol, he had only to take out a game licence, and once a pistol was possessed by him it could go from hand to hand without the slightest restriction. The first effect of the Bill would be to enormously increase the number of pistols thus passing from hand to hand, instead of being sold in the regular course of trade, or which were surreptitiously sold, and there would thus be a large quantity of pistols available at very cheap prices for that class of characters who made no special point of obeying the law, and from whom it was desired to keep pistols. There was a prohibition as to the sale of pistols, but the Bill did not in the least prevent the gift of pistols. It did not prevent the use of pistols by persons who borrowed them. The only persons it did deal with were those under 18 years of age, who, it said, ought not to be allowed to sell or to use pistols. That was the only clause which had been supported by the opinion of the House. Let him show how utterly the Bill failed to face the matter. One of the speakers had referred to seamen as being a class who ought not to have pistols. But there was a special exemption of seamen who were about to leave the country within 14 days. They were allowed to purchase pistols; therefore, the persons who wanted pistols on board ship were specially exempted from this Bill, which that hon. Member was about to support because he considered it would keep seamen from having pistols. Again, the Bill did not apply to the sale of pistols except by persons in the ordinary way of business. In other words, they could be sold from hand to hand, without the faintest interference being offered by this Bill. He might describe this Bill as a Bill for the purpose of hampering people from getting pistols who would probably make good use of them, whilst there was no obstacle whatever placed in the way of those who were willing to get them by surreptitious means. One clause related to pistols which were already in the possession of persons, and it provided that every person who possessed a pistol must obtain from the post office a licence to possess such pistol, for which a fee was to be charged; but such licence was not to be granted to any person who did not comply with certain provisions set forth under three heads in the first sub-section. In other words, there was an absolute confiscation of all pistols possessed by such persons who were not qualified now to purchase them; and any person having a pistol at the present moment, however fit and competent he might be to manage that pistol, would have it confiscated because he could get no licence to possess it. If it was said that it was not intended that in such cases they should be confiscated, people would continue to possess them without licences at all. The only real evil touched by the Bill was the question of pistols being used by persons under 18 years of age; and that the House should be asked, or that the authority of the Government should be used, to persuade them to support a Bill in which one short clause of about six lines, out of four or five pages, alone was defensible, appeared to him to be an invitation to engage in a kind of Legislation they ought never to be asked to pass. Surely, if the Secretary of State thought so seriously on this question, they were entitled to ask that the matter should be brought forward by somebody with a sense of the responsibility of Legislation, and they should not be invited to pass Bills like this interfering with such a large number of people in the hope that they might reduce an accident list which amounted to something like eight or nine cases a year. Was that Legislation they ought to be asked to pass with the sanction of one of the great Departments of the Government? He submitted to the House that they ought to wait till somebody was prepared with the full responsibility of Office to draw up a Bill, the clauses of which he could defend, before they were asked to support any Legislation of this kind.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 204; Noes, 85.—(Division List, No. 15.)

THE MARQUESS OF CARMARTHEN moved that the Bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Law.

*MR. HOPWOOD complained that the Government Whips had put pressure upon hon. Members to support the Bill. Had the measure been left to the unbiassed judgment of the House, the result would have been different. He was, therefore, disposed to say that his opposition to the Bill would be continued until the Bill assumed a shape that would do credit to the House, and to those who brought it forward. What was the proposal now made? Was it to evade the light of day? Was it to prevent the House, which had already been operated upon, having the provisions of the Bill laid fully before the public? He did not see why the House should part with its jurisdiction in this respect. The Bill was not such a one as should be sent to the Standing Committee on Law. That Committee was intended to consider Bills on the principle of which they were all agreed; it was intended as a tribunal where, without passion or political bias, the different clauses of measures should be threshed out. Such measures as the Bankruptcy Bill, and as the Court of Criminal Appeal Bill, seemed to him eminently measures which should occupy the time of the Standing Committee on Law. This measure, however, appealed to the Members in their public capacity. He desired to keep the Bill here, and he hoped the House would also hold that view. The consideration of a measure which affected the ancient principles of the liberty of the subject should take place where the individual vote and action of each Member could be observed by the public. He regretted the adhesion of the Government to the Bill: it was an adhesion which made some of their supporters less and less inclined to stick to them.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. H. H. ASQUITH, Fife, E.) said, the question was one entirely for the decision of the House. The hon. and learned Gentleman had suggested that the Government Whips had put some pressure on hon. Members on their side of the House. That was incorrect. The Government Whips were entitled to vote like any other Members, but so far as the Government were concerned, no pressure of any sort or kind had been placed or would be placed on any hon. Member in regard to the Bill. The Government had no responsibility for the Bill. Many of its provisions they strongly objected to, but they were not out of sympathy with its object, and if the measure could be made workable and presentable, they would not be sorry, but indeed glad. The Motion made by the noble Lord was entirely for the decision of the House. He confessed that, personally, he was in favour of referring all Bills of this sort to a Standing Committee, for in that way they saved the time of the House, which might be more usefully employed than in working out the details of what after all was only a secondary measure. He did not know whether the Standing Committee on Law was the best Committee to refer this Bill to. He was rather disposed to think the Standing Committee on Trade was a better tribunal to deal with the Bill; but, whatever the decision of the House was, the Government would acquiesce in it.

COLONEL J. P. NOLAN (Galway, N.) asked why lawyers were supposed to know all about this Bill? He had read that in old days the lawyers in the Four Courts in Dublin were very handy with their pistols, and in those days there might have been some sense in referring a Bill like this to a committee of lawyers; but the position was different now. He agreed with the Home Secretary that, if the Bill was to be sent to a Committee, it should be referred to the Standing Committee on Trade, because traders were more interested in the Bill than lawyers. But he would much prefer to see the details of the measure discussed in the House itself.

*MR. J. LLOYD MORGAN also opposed the Motion to refer this Bill to a Standing Committee. Though its details were fitted for an investigation by the Standing Committee on Trade, he preferred to keep the Bill in the House.

THE MARQUESS OF CARMARTHEN rose in his place, and claimed to move—"That the Question be now put."

Question—"That the Question be now put," put, and agreed to.

Question put accordingly.

The House divided:—Ayes 189; Noes 75.—(Division List, No. 16.)

Ordered—That the Bill be committed to the Standing Committtee on Law, &c.

LEICESTER WRITS.

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Main Question [13th February], as amended,

> "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire and report on the Returns made to this House to the two Writs issued on 22nd August 1894, for the return of Members to serve for the Borough of Leicester, and the circumstances attending the holding of the election, and whether, as the time for petitioning has expired, the case is such as to require futher action in respect of such Returns on the part of the House."—(*Sir Henry James.*)

Question put, and agreed to.

Ordered—That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire and report on the Returns made to this House to the two Writs issued on 22nd August 1894, for the return of Members to serve for the Borough of Leicester, and the circumstances attending the holding of the election, and whether, as the time for petitioning has expired, the case is such as to require further action in respect of such Returns on the part of the House.

RULE OF THE ROAD AT SEA.

*SIR DONALD CURRIE (Perthshire, W.) moved:—

> "That a Select Committee be appointed to consider the objections which have been raised to the adoption by Order in Council of Rule 15 of the Revised International Regulations for preventing collisions at sea, dealing with sound signals in fog, as suggested by the Washington Conference, and considered by the Maritime Powers."

He said that he wished to press the hon. Member for Lynn Regis to withdraw his block, in view of the declared opinions of the shipowners and shipmasters of the United Kingdom.

*MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis) moved, as an Amendment, to leave out all after "been raised to the," and insert "Order in Council of the 30th day of January 1893, relative to the fixing and screening of ships' side-lights, and to the adoption by Order in Council of the sound signals prescribed by Article 15 and Article 28 of the revised regulations for preventing collision at sea, as set forth in the Board of Trade Circular to shipowners of March 6th, 1894." He said that he moved this in accordance with the wishes of the most important meeting ever held in Liverpool. He was extremely anxious that the Committee should meet, but he was also anxious that it should deal with all the subjects of complaint, and not with part of them only.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. J. BRYCE, Aberdeen, S.) said, that since the meeting in Liverpool, to which the hon. Member referred, he had received a deputation at the Board of Trade of the bodies represented at the meeting. He stated to the deputation that the Government would be willing to refer the question of sidelights to a Departmental Committee appointed for the purpose, and the deputawere quite satisfied with the answer. It was much better that a question which could only be understood by those possessing technical knowledge should be considered by such a Committee. The matter was entirely within the province of the Government to deal with, and the reasons which existed for referring the other questions to a Committee of the House did not exist with regard to it. There was a general wish on the part of the shipowners that the Committee should be appointed.

MR. J. H. WILSON (Middlesbrough) said, that as the representative of a large body of the seamen of this country, he supported the motion of the hon. Member for Perthshire. If a Committee were appointed to inquire as to fog signals some good might be done. As to screening side lights, the seamen were willing to leave the matter to competent men who had thoroughly investigated it.

MR. C. W. CAYZER (Barrow-in-Furness) and SIR A. K. ROLLIT (Islington, S.) appealed to the hon. Member for King's Lynn to withdraw his amendment.

*MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES replied, that in the absence of any reason being assigned for withdrawing his amendment, he should persist in it. He hoped the President of the Board of Trade would see his way to adopt it.

*MR. W. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) and SIR D. CURRIE joined in the appeal to the hon. Member to withdraw.

*MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES said, he held that he had in some sort a mandate from one of the most important meetings that ever met in Liverpool, and no word had reached him from Liverpool asking him to reconsider his amendment.

*MR. SPEAKER: Does the hon. Gentleman withdraw?

*MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES: No, Sir, I must maintain my amendment.

Further consideration adjourned until March 6.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (EXEMPTION FROM SCHOOL ATTENDANCE).

Bill to regulate the conditions under which children are exempted from Attendance at School, ordered to be brought in by Sir Richard Temple, Mr. Tomlinson, and Mr. Dodd; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 13 March, and to be printed. [Bill 142.]

ST. JOHN'S INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL, WALTHAMSTOW.

*THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GEORGE RUSSELL, North Beds) Moved for an Address for copies of Report of the Commissioner appointed by the Secretary of State on September 24 1894, to inquire into allegations made regarding the treatment of children in the St. John's Industrial School for Roman Catholic boys, at Walthamstow, and of the letter addressed on November 24 1894, after the receipt of that Report by the Secretary of State to the Managers of the School.

MR. ARTHUR O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.) Moved as an Amendment, that the evidence taken at the Inquiry should be included.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

COMMISSIONERS OF SEWERS OF THE CITY OF LONDON (BATHS AND WASHHOUSES) BILL.

Ordered—That the Select Committee on the Commissioners of Sewers of the City of London (Baths and Washhouses) Bill do consist of five members, three to be nominated by the House, and two by the Committee of Selection.

Ordered—That all Petitions against the Bill presented three clear days before the meeting of the Committee be referred to the Committee: that the Petitioners praying to be heard by themselves, their counsel, or agents be heard against the Bill, and counsel heard in support of the Bill.

Ordered—That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered—That three be the quorum.

Ordered—That Mr. Burnie, Mr. Alban Gibbs, and Mr. Alpheus Morton be Members of the Committee.—*(Mr. Alpheus Morton.)*

CONCILIATION IN TRADE DISPUTES.

MR. J. BRYCE gave notice that on Friday he would ask leave to introduce a Bill to provide for conciliation in trade disputes.

KITCHEN AND REFRESHMENT ROOMS (HOUSE OF COMMONS).

Leave given to the Select Committee to report their observations to the House.

First Report brought up and read; Report to lie on Table, and to be printed. [No. 76.]

House adjourned at Five minutes before Six o'clock.

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TO

THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(AUTHORISED EDITION).

VOLUME XXX. FOURTH SERIES.

FIRST VOLUME OF SESSION 1895.

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1R., 2R., 3R., Speech delivered on First, Second, or Third Reading.
Adj. Adjourned.
A. Answers.
c. Commons.
Com. Committee.
com. Committed.
Intro. Introduction.
l. Lords.
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Pres. Presented.
Q. Questions.
Rep. Reported.
R.P. Report Progress.
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Curzon, Hon. George N., *Lancashire, Southport*
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Lough Erne Drainage Scheme *Feb* 25, 1479
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Darling, Mr. C. J., *Deptford*
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Darwin, Major Leonard, *Staffordshire, Lichfield*
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Hired Men in the Dockyards, *Qs.* Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen, Mr. Hozier; *As.* Mr. E. Robertson *Feb* 14, 786
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Labourers' Dwellings (Ireland) Bill
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2 R. Mr. J. Stuart (Moved 2 R.) 1373, 1383, 1410, 1411, 1412, 1413, 1414; Sir J. Lubbock 1379, 1384, 1385, 1386, 1387; Mr. Shaw-Lefevre 1384, 1385, 1386, 1387; Mr. E. Boulnois 1388, 1410, 1413; Mr. H. L. Lawson 1391; Mr. J. Chamberlain 1392, 1404, 1408; Sir W. Harcourt 1398, 1401; Mr. Goschen 1400, 1401, 1411; Mr. Cohen 1401; Mr. J. F. Moulton 1403, 1404; Sir R. E. Webster 1406, 1411, 1412; Mr. S. Buxton 1408; Sir H. James 1409 (Division 1410); Mr. E. B. Hoare 1411; Mr. F. G. Banbury 1412 (Division 1413); Mr. C. A. Whitmore 1413; Mr. T. Halsey 1413, Sir J. Savory 1414 *Feb* 22

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c. Intro., Mr. W. J. Reynolds; Read 1° *Feb* 8, 312

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c. Intro., Mr. W. H. K. Redmond; Read 1° *Feb* 8, 317

Land Tenure Bill
c. Intro., Mr. G. Lambert; Read 1° *Feb* 8, 311

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c. Intro., Mr. W. Smith; Read 1° *Feb* 8, 319

Lands Valuation (Scotland) Acts Amendment Bill
c. Intro., Sir J. Carmichael, Read 1° *Feb* 11, 539.
2R Sir J. Carmichael (Moved 2R) 1180, 1181; Sir C. J. Pearson, 1180, 1181; Mr. J. B. Balfour, 1181; Mr. J. Caldwell, 1182
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Land Values Taxation by Local Authorities
c. Intro., Mr. Naoroji; Read 1° *Feb* 26, 1573

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Law of Distress Amendment Act (1888) Bill
l. Intro., Lord Chancellor; Read 1ª *Feb* 11, 397; Read 2ª *Feb* 18, 938

Law of Inheritance Amendment Bill
l. Intro., Lord Chancellor; Read 1ª *Feb* 12, 541

LAWRENCE, Mr. W. F., *Liverpool, Abercromby*
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Liverpool New Cattle Market and Railway Bill *Feb* 26, 1554, 1555
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LAWSON, H. L. W., *Gloucester, Cirencester*
Acquisition of Allotment Land *Feb* 22, 1433
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LAWSON, Mr. J. G., *York, N.R., Thirsk*
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LAWSON, SIR WILFRID, *Cumberland, Cockermouth*
Frost and the Water Rate *Feb* 22, 1434

LEA, Sir T., *Londonderry, S.*
Primary Education in Ireland *Feb.* 6, 130

Leasehold (Purchase of Fee Simple) Bill
c. Intro., Mr. H. E. Kearley; Read 1° *Feb* 8, 316

Leaseholds Bill
c. Intro., Mr. T. H. Bolton; Read 1° *Feb* 20, 1236

LEES, Mr. Elliott, *Birkenhead*
Cavalry Horses *Feb* 14, 733
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LEGH, Mr. T. W., *Lancashire, S.W., Newton*
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Leicester Elections
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LEIGH, Sir J., *Stockport*
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LEIGHTON, Mr. S., *Shropshire, Oswestry*
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LENG, Sir J., *Dundee*
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LEON, Mr. H. S., *Bucks, N.*
Finance Act 1894 *Feb* 7, 208

LEWIS, Mr. J. H., *Flint Boroughs*
Afforesting Crown Lands in Wales *Feb* 14, 727
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c. Intro., Sir A. K. Rollit; Read 1° *Feb* 11, 540

Licensing Act (1872) Amendment Bill
l. Intro., Lord Norton; Read 1ª *Feb* 18, 939

Licensing Acts Amendment Bill
c. Intro., Mr. H. Broadhurst; Read 1° *Feb* 13, 692

Light Railways
Motion by Sir Bernhard Samuelson *Feb* 8, 286

Liquor Traffic Local Veto (England) Bill
c. Intro., Sir W. Lawson; Read 1° *Feb* 8, 310

Liquor Traffic Local Veto (Scotland) Bill
c. Mr. G. Beith; Read 1° *Feb* 8, 310

Liverpool New Cattle Market and Railway Bill
2R. Colonel Sandys 1554, 1555; Mr. W. F. Lawrence, 1554, 1555; Mr. T. Snape, 1556; Sir G. Baden-Powell, 1556. Bill Read 2° and com. *Feb* 26, 1556

Live Stock—Cross Channel Transit of (see AGRICULTURE)

LLOYD, Mr. W., *Wednesbury*
Bimetallism *Feb.* 26, 1608

Local Government Act (1888) Amendment Bill
c. Intro., Mr. J. Bigwood; Read 1° *Feb* 8, 314

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 1) Bill
Read 2° and Com. *Feb* 27, 1657

Local Government (Scotland) Act (1894) Amendment Bill
c. Intro., Mr. C. B. Renshaw; Read 1° *Feb* 11, 539.
2R. deferred *Feb* 12, 636
Read 2° *Feb* 13, 690
Read 3° and passed *Feb* 14, 820
l. Read 1ª *Feb* 15, 821
Read 2ª *Feb* 18, 937
Passed through Com. without Amendment *Feb* 19, 1061
Read 3ª and passed *Feb* 21, 1237

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President—Mr. G. J. SHAW-LEFEVRE
Secretary—Sir B. W. FOSTER
Acquisition of Allotment Land, Q. Mr. H. L. Lawson; *A.* Mr. Shaw-Lefevre *Feb* 22, 1433
Assistant Overseers Election, Q. Mr. Holland; *A.* Mr. Shaw-Lefevre *Feb* 21 1282
Cellar Bakehouses, Q. Mr. Hanbury; *A.* Mr. Shaw-Lefevre *Feb.* 25, 1482
Chard Borough, Q. Mr. Strachey; *A.* Mr. Shaw-Lefevre *Feb* 19, 1104
Frost and Salt in the Streets, Qs. Mr. Crombie; *As.* Mr. Shaw-Lefevre; Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Feb.* 18, 941
Frost and the Water Rate, Qs. Mr. J. Rowlands, Sir W. Lawson; *As.* Mr. Shaw-Lefevre *Feb.* 22, 1434
Frost and the Water Supply, Q. Mr. J. C. Macdona; *A.* Mr. Shaw-Lefevre *Feb* 21, 1245
Influenza, Qs. Mr. Aird, Mr. Johnston, Mr. Cremer; *As.* Mr. Shaw-Lefevre. Mr. Speaker *Feb* 26, 1570
Labour Exchanges, Q. Colonel Hughes; *A.* Mr. Shaw-Lefevre *Feb* 18, 952
Local Government Act, 1894, *Q.* Sir C. Dilke; *A.* Mr. Shaw-Lefevre *Feb* 21, 1247
Outdoor Relief, Q. Mr. Dodd; *A.* Mr. Shaw-Lefevre *Feb* 18, 941
Parish Council
  Accounts, Q. Mr. J. H. Johnstone; *A.* Mr. Shaw-Lefevre *Feb* 18, 955
  Allotments, Q. Mr. Courtney; *A.* Mr. Shaw-Lefevre *Feb* 25, 1481
  Chairmen, Q. Colonel H. Vincent; *A.* Mr. Shaw-Lefevre *Feb* 18, 961
  Elections, Q. Mr. W. Mount; *A.* Mr. Shaw-Lefevre *Feb* 22, 1433. *Qs.* Mr. H. Johnstone, Mr. Jeffreys, Colonel Lockwood, Mr. W. H. Long; *As.* Mr. Shaw-Lefevre *Feb* 26, 1567
  Gloucester, Q. Mr. H. L. W. Lawson; *A.* Mr. Shaw-Lefevre *Feb* 22, 1419
  Meetings, Q. Major Darwin; *A.* Mr. Shaw-Lefevre *Feb* 21, 1244

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  Parish Councils and Recreation Grounds, Q. Mr. Jeffreys; A. Mr. Shaw-Lefevre *Feb* 7, 216
  Parochial Charities, *Q.* Mr. Morton; *A.* Mr. Shaw-Lefevre *Feb* 18, 961
  Pharmaceutical Societies (English and Irish), *Qs.* Mr. T. M. Healy; *As.* Mr. Shaw-Lefevre *Feb* 19, 1103
  Places of Entertainment—Control of, *Q.* Mr. Disraeli; *A.* Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, *Feb* 12, 564
  Poor Law and Distress Funds, *Qs.* Mr. Hardie; *As.* Mr. Shaw-Lefevre *Feb* 19, 1101
  Poor Law Guardians and the Unemployed, *Q.* Mr. Carvill; *A.* Mr. Shaw-Lefevre *Feb* 18, 969, *Q.* Mr. Hanbury; *A.* Mr. Shaw-Lefevre *Feb* 21, 1259
  Puerperal Fever, *Q.* Mr. J. C. Macdona; *A.* Sir Walter Foster, *Feb* 8, 291
  Strand Union, Edmonton, *Q.* Mr. Labouchere; *A.* Mr. Shaw-Lefevre *Feb* 25, 1481
  Vaccinating Firemen at Liverpool, *Q.* Mr. Hopwood; *A.* Sir Walter Foster, *Feb* 12, 548
  Valuers and County Council, *Q.* Mr. W. H. Long; *A.* Mr. Shaw-Lefevre *Feb* 19, 1104

LOCKWOOD, Colonel A., *Essex, Epping*
  Parcel Post *Feb* 15, 825
  Parish Councils Elections *Feb* 26, 1569
  Queen's Speech, Reply to 1008
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LOCKWOOD, SIR FRANK (Solicitor-General), *York*
  Rating of Machinery Bill, 2R, *Feb* 20, 1227

LODER, Mr. G. W. E., *Brighton*
  District Councils and the Magistracy *Feb* 25, 1472
  National Portrait Gallery *Feb* 14, 724

Lodger Franchise Bill
c. Intro., Mr. H. W. Paul; Read 1° *Feb* 8, 313

LOGAN, Mr. J. W., *Leicester, Harborough*
  Indian Army *Feb* 8, 295
  Queen's Speech—Reply to, 341, 344, 345

London (Boundary Street, Bethnal Green) Provisional Order Bill
c. Ordered to be brought in *Feb* 22, 1414
  Referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills *Feb* 22, 1415

London County Council (General Powers) Bill
  2R. Sir H. James, 1066, 1069; Mr. J. Stuart, 1066; Mr. J. Caldwell, 1067; Mr. Deputy Speaker, 1067; Mr. R. G. Webster, 1067; Sir Julian Goldsmid, 1068; Mr. J. F. Moulton, 1068; Sir Blundell Maple, 1068; Mr. J. P. Williams, 1069—*Feb* 19

London County Council (Tramways) Bill
  2R Mr. H. Kimber, 1073; Sir J. Blundell Maple, 1073; Mr. G. Howell, 1074 *Feb* 19.
  Read 2° *Feb* 19, 1074

London County Council (Vauxhall Bridge) Bill
  Read 2° *Feb* 19, 1072

London Municipalities Bill
c. Intro., Sir F. D. Dixon-Hartland; Read 1° *Feb* 8, 310

London Valuation Assessment Bill
  Q. Sir H. James; *Obs.* Mr. J. Stuart; *A.* Mr. Speaker *Feb* 14, 706 [*Bill withdrawn*]

London Water Supply
  Mr. J. Stuart *Feb* 25, 1468

LONDONDERRY, Marquess of
  Dismissal of Dr. Moffett and Mr. Bourke *Feb* 11, 417; *Feb.* 25, 1446

LONG, Mr. W. H. *Liverpool, West Derby*
  Parish Councils Elections *Feb* 26, 1568
  Valuers and County Councils *Feb* 19, 1104

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LORD CHANCELLOR—Lord HERSCHELL

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LOUGH, Mr. T., *Islington, W.*
  Bimetallism *Feb* 26, 1653
  Queen's Speech—Reply to, 509, 776

LOWTHER, Right Hon. JAMES, *Kent, Thanet*
  Foreign Prison-made Goods, Importation of, *Feb* 19, 1145; *Feb* 25, 1485
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LOWTHER, Mr. J. W., *Cumberland, Penrith*
  Jarvis's Charity (Staunton-on-Wye) *Feb* 21, 1368
  Niger Coast Protectorate *Feb* 25, 1485
  Pensions of Prison Officers, *Feb* 11, 453
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LUBBOCK, Sir J., *London University*
  Lambeth Water (Transfer) Bill, 2R. *Feb* 22, 1379, 1384, 1385, 1386, 1387; *Feb* 25, 1448, 1449
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Luttrell, Mr. H. C. F., *Devon, Tavistock*
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Maamtrasna Prisoners
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McCartney, Mr. W. E., *Antrim, S.*
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Macdona, Mr. J. C., *Southwark, Rotherhithe*
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"*Elbe*" Disaster *Feb* 11, 465
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Macdonald, Mr. J. A. M., *Tower Hamlets, Bow.*
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Macfarlane, Sir D. H., *Argyllshire*
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MacNeill, Mr. J. G. S., *Donegal, S.*
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McCalmont, Captain J., *Antrim, E.*
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McCartan, Mr. M., *Down, S.*
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McCarthy, Mr. J., *Longford, N.*
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McGilligan, Mr. P., *Fermanagh, S.*
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M'Hugh, Mr. P. A., *Leitrim, N.*
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McLaren, Mr. C. P. B., *Leicester, Bosworth*
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McLaren, Mr. W. S. B., *Cheshire, Crewe*
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McLeod, Mr. J., *Sutherland.*
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Madagascar—French Expedition to
Qs. Mr. H. Heaton, Mr. W. Johnston; *As.* Sir E. Grey *Feb* 15, 834

Maden, Mr. J H., *Lancashire, Rossendale*
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Mains, Mr. J., *Donegal, N.*
Civil Bill Courts (Ireland) *Feb* 19, 1082
Distress in Donegal *Feb* 18, 952
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Mandeville, Mr F., *Tipperary, S.*
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Tower Bridge (Southern Approach) Bill, 2R. *Feb* 19, 1070, 1071, 1072

Market Gardeners' Compensation Bill
c. Intro., Col. C. W. Long; Read 1° *Feb* 8, 316

Market Gardeners' Compensation (No. 2), Bill
c. Intro. Mr. F. A. Channing; Read 1° *Feb* 8, 320

Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister Bill
c. Intro., Mr. H. Fell Pease; Read 1° *Feb* 8, 310

Married Persons' Small Industrial Income Tax Relief Bill.
c. Intro., Mr. Bartley; Read 1° *Feb* 22, 1438

MATHER, Mr. W., *Lancashire, S.E., Gorton*
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MATTHEWS, Right Hon. H., *Birmingham, E.*
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MAXWELL, Mr. W. J., *Dumfriesshire.*
Highlands and Islands Commission *Feb* 11, 455

MAXWELL, Sir H. E., *Wigtonshire*
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MELLOR, RIGHT HON. J. W. (Chairman of Committees of Ways and Means, and Deputy Speaker), *York W. R., Sowerby*
New Standing Order *Feb* 25, 1450
(Rulings as Deputy Speaker)
The Deputy Speaker could not say tha the interference in a private Bill, wit ht franchise established under a public A was a Question of Order *Feb* 19, 1067
The Motion could not now be amended. The only course was to withdraw the Resolution, as amended, and move it in the altered form *(Post Office Nominations) Feb* 19, 1134

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Miscellaneous Rulings *Feb* 18, 971; *Feb* 19, 1071, 1074, 1179

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c. Intro., Mr. C. B. Stuart-Wortley; Read 1° *Feb* 8, 318.

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Collisions at Sea, Qs. Mr. Gibson Bowles; *As.* Mr. Bryce *Feb* 7, 188. *Qs.* Mr. Gibson Bowles; *As.* Mr. Bryce *Feb* 8, 300
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Fishing Trade Apprentices, Q. Mr. Heneage; *A.* Mr. Bryce *Feb* 12, 542
Fog Sound Signals, Qs. Sir D. Currie, Mr. Bowles; *As.* Mr. Bryce *Feb* 14, 759
Glasgow Harbour Fatality, Q. Sir D. H. Macfarlane; *A.* Mr. J. B. Balfour *Feb* 11, 449
Howth Harbour—Condition of, Q. Mr. J. Ross; *A.* Sir J. T. Hibbert *Feb* 12, 550
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Losses of British Ships, Q. Mr. Gibson Bowles; *A.* Mr. Bryce *Feb* 8, 308
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Scottish Sea Fisheries Bill—l. Intro., Lord Tweedmouth; Read 1ª *Feb* 7, 177
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Trawling—Illegal, Q. Mr. J. G. Weir; *A.* Sir G. O. Trevelyan *Feb* 21, 1267
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Merchant Shipping Acts Amendment Bill
c. Intro., Mr. R. Neville; Read 1° *Feb* 13, 691

Merchant Shipping Acts Amendment (No. 2) Bill
c. Intro., Mr. W. Field; Read 1° *Feb* 13, 691

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Cattle Movements in London, Restrictions on, *Qs.* Sir R. Rollit, Major Rasch; *A.* Mr. Gardner *Feb* 8, 301

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Dead Bodies in the Thames, *Q.* Mr. Macdona; *A.* Mr. Bryce *Feb* 22, 1438

Frost and the Water Rate, *Q.* Mr. J. Rowlands, Sir W. Lawson; *A.* Mr. Shaw-Lefevre *Feb* 22, 1434

Lambeth Waters (Transfer) Bill, 2R. Mr. J. Stuart (*moved* 2R.) 1373, 1383, 1410, 1411, 1412, 1413, 1414; Sir J. Lubbock, 1379, 1384, 1385, 1386, 1387; Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, 1384, 1385, 1386, 1387; Mr. E. Boulnois, 1388, 1410, 1413; Mr. H. L. W. Lawson, 1391; Mr. J. Chamberlain, 1392, 1404, 1408; Sir W. Harcourt, 1398, 1401; Mr. Goschen, 1400, 1401, 1411; Mr. Cohen, 1401; Mr. J. F. Moulton, 1403, 1404; Sir R. E. Webster, 1406, 1411, 1412; Mr. S. Buxton, 1408; Sir H. James, 1409 (*Division* 1410); Mr. E. B. Hoare, 1411; Mr. F. G. Banbury, 1412 (*Division* 1413); Mr. C. A. Whitmore, 1413; Mr. T. Halsey, Sir J. Savory, 1414 *Feb* 22

London (Boundary Street, Bethnal Green) Provisional Order Bill—c. Ordered to be brought in *Feb* 22, 1414—*c.* Referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills *Feb* 22, 1415

London County Council (General Powers) Bill, 2R. Sir H. James, 1066, 1069; Mr. J. Stuart, 1066; Mr. J. Caldwell, 1067; Mr. R. G. Webster, 1067; Sir Julian Goldsmid, 1068; Mr. J. F. Moulton, 1068; Sir Blundell Maple, 1068; Mr. J. P. Williams, 1069, *Feb* 19

London County Council (Tramways) Bill, 2R, Mr. H. Kimber, 1073; Sir J. Blundell Maple, 1073; Mr. P. Howell, 1074; Read 2° *Feb* 19, 1074

London County Council (Vauxhall Bridge) Bill, Read 2° *Feb* 19, 1072

London Municipalities Bill—c. Intro., Sir F. D. Dixon-Hartland; Read 1° *Feb* 8, 310

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London Valuation Assessment Bill, *Q.* Sir H. James; *Obs.* Mr. J. Stuart; *A.* Mr. Speaker *Feb* 14, 706 *(Bill withdrawn)*

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Metropolis Management (St. Paul) Deptford Bill—c. Intro., Mr. C. J. Darling; Read 1° *Feb* 8, 320

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  In London in Severe Weather, *Qs.* Mr. A. F. Jeffreys; *A.* Mr. Campbell-Bannerman *Feb* 12, 558
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Telephone—London and Paris, *Qs.* Mr. J. Henniker Heaton; *As.* Mr. A. Morley

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Mines (Eight Hours) Bill

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Mining Easements Bill

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Coal Dust, *Q.* Mr. David Thomas; *A.* Mr. Asquith *Feb* 11, 456

Cotton—Raw, *Qs.* Sir W. H. Houldsworth; Mr. J. Whiteley; *As.* Sir W. Harcourt, *Feb* 12, 562

Cromwell—a Statute of Oliver, *Qs.* Mr. W. Johnston, Mr. S. Leighton; *A.* Mr. H. J. Gladstone *Feb* 11, 452. *Q.* Mr. Hayden; *A.* Mr. H. J. Gladstone *Feb.* 14, 744

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- *Workmen's Wages at Shrewsbury,* Q. Mr. H. Greene; *A.* Mr. H. J. Gladstone *Feb* 12, 551

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- The Question was not in Order, as it discussed what was in favour of the prisoner or not *Feb* 14, 719
- Under the Rules of the House, a Member was responsible for the statements set forth in the Question *Feb* 14, 756

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The Question as to whether the hon. Member had voted in the previous night's Division, was now asked too late, but the general rule is, that Members who have heard the Question put, either the first or second time, ought to go in the Lobby and vote. It is not possible for the House to maintain that a Member shall be forced to vote, and there are means of escape which are known to Members *Feb* 22, 1415, 1416, 1417

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